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ABSTRACT

This publication contains the following 24 case studies of adult education in Australia: "NSW Department of Agriculture Home Study Programme" (O'Neill); "Self-Help Adult Education: The University of the Third Age at the Brisbane CAE" (Swindell); "Marriage Enrichment Programme" (D. Kerr, C. Kerr); "Carringbush Library: A Place to Be" (Letcher); "Centre for Continuing Education: Community Education Programme of Non-Vocational, Non-Award Courses" (Fiegel); "Discussion Programme at the Victorian Council of Adult Education" (Dow); "The Aboriginal Community Management Training Programme" (McNamara); "Women's Access Programme" (La Nauze); "Workplace Basic Education Project" (Newcombe et al.); "Women's Health. The Middle Years" (Degeling); "The NSW Board of Adult Education Literacy Programmes" (Wickert); "Post-graduate Refresher Course for Veterinarians in 'Orthopaedics--Dogs and Cats'" (Bryden); "The 'Welcare' Programme of the Centre for Continuing Education, Monash University" (McDonell); "A Country Paediatric Programme" (Duyverman); "Preparatory Studies at the Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education" (Crock, Cottman); "Refresher Education for Company Directors" (Brady); "Increasing Citizen Participation in Local Government" (Holderness-Roddam); "Social Developers' Network" (Iceton); "The Trade Union Postal Courses Scheme" (Bluff); "A Non-credit Distance Education Programme" (Wolstenholme); "School for Seniors" (Benham, Vickers); "The Adult Migrant Education Program in the Northern Territory" (McGrath); "Learning for the Less Mobile" (Elsworth); and "Community Living Project (C.L.P.)" (Bleechmore). (NLL)

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Case Studies in

AUSTRALIAN ADULT EDUCATION

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RALPH J. CLARK
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CE 053 432

Department of Continuing Education, University of New England
and the
New South Wales Board of Adult Education.

CASE STUDIES IN AUSTRALIAN ADULT EDUCATION

Edited by

Ralph J. Clark and S. John Rooth

Department of Continuing Education,
University of New England and the
New South Wales Board of Adult Education.

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The preparation of this publication was collaboratively undertaken with Dr Ralph Clark.

S.J. Rooth

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PREFACE

S.J. Rooth

The idea of a publication of Australian case studies of adult education originated from a project of the International Council of Adult Education. The outline of this project, "A World Perspective: International Comparative Analysis of Selected Educational Programmes for Adults" was first mooted by Professor Alan B. Knox, Professor of Adult Education, University of Wisconsin, U.S.A. early in 1985. It was later discussed by the International Council of Adult Education Assembly in Buenos Aires in December 1985 and a final format of the project was agreed upon in September 1986.

The international projected was conducted on behalf of the International Council of Adult Education by two project directors, Professor Alan B. Knox and Professor Dusan Savicevic of the University of Belgrade, Yugoslavia. The purposes of the project were to help adult educators from various parts of the world:

- to appreciate the diversity of adult education programmes;
- to understand ways in which such programmes function in the society in which they occur;
- to analyse similarities and differences that can help us learn from each other.

More than 40 nations indicated interest in the project covering three quarters of the world's population and land area. It was anticipated that some smaller nations, who indicated interest, would not be able to formally complete descriptions. Nonetheless, in addition to the project directors Professors Knox and Savicevic, case co-ordinators were appointed in 40 participating nations to arrange for the preparation of case descriptions of adult education programmes in their countries.

The countries which agreed to participate in the project included Australia, Canada, China, SREFAL (including Mexico and several other Latin American nations), Hong Kong, India, Israel, Japan, Nigeria, Norway, Soviet Union (USSR), Sweden, Uganda, United Kingdom, U.S.A., West Germany and Yugoslavia.

The focus of the international project was on typical large, local and regional programmes for adults. It was accepted that this is only one level in the social hierarchy which ranges from individual adult learning projects to entire adult education programmes in a nation.

To facilitate the process of comparative analysis of programmes on an international scale a common approach was adopted. This approach included a glossary of definition of main words prepared for use in case descriptions and the provision of comprehensive notes and recommended outlines for use in the structure of case studies.

To enable comparative analysis of similar programmes categories were adopted to include types of programmes that were known to be widespread although not necessarily present in all the participating nations. These categories were:- Literacy; Agriculture; Workers; Professional-Technical; Professional- Other; Secondary (part-time secondary school completion programmes); Higher (part-time or short-term college and university completion programmes for working adults); Health; Family: Leisure and Citizen programmes.

In the selection of Australian case descriptions attention was focussed on invitations to individuals rather than to organisations. Individuals were consulted personally before formal letters of invitation were sent to them to prepare case descriptions. In addition to the categories adopted for the world perspective project an additional category "Underserviced Populations" was used in Australia to include the elderly, Aborigines and other ethnic groups, women, handicapped and geographically isolated.

Every endeavour was made to ensure nationwide coverage of the descriptions. Some studies depart from the international project focus on typical programmes in so far as they represent singular ways of meeting peculiar local needs.

One major benefit of the world perspective project was to point up similarities and differences in institutions and practices between different countries. It is also apparent that we have much to learn from each other about our programming in adult education within Australia.

Case descriptions in this publication correspond in structure to the studies in the international project although they have been edited and illustrative material introduced for the interest of Australian readers.

It is anticipated that this collection of case studies will be valuable not only to students of adult education but to the many professionals and others engaged in the social practice of adult education in this country.

INTRODUCTION

Ralph J. Clark

Adult education has traditionally been accorded peripheral status in the field of education. This assessment is accurate insofar as funding support and political recognition have been concerned. But this is too sweeping a judgement since even a cursory examination of the history of Australian adult education reveals its having been of great importance to individuals, communities, and society at large. Contrary to being peripheral one might assert that it is central to the life of the nation. In A Nation of Learners: Participants in Adult Education, M.D.R. Evans notes that, "Adult Education has been growing for decades, but expansion is especially rapid in the 1980s." How peripheral can a field of endeavour be in which six out of every ten adult Australians have been engaged, with the average Australian having taken about three courses? A re-assessment is required but also some re-assertions.

Contributing to this perception of being ancilliary has been the failure of the field to adequately promote itself. This is not a condemnation of adult education or its proponents since the corridors of powers have often been bounded by pad-locked doors and barred windows. We have, nevertheless, failed to advertise, failed to market effectively. One very evident feature of this is that there are few books which portray in a descriptive, analytical and educative way the range and diversity of adult education as a field of social practice. Recent publications such as Colin Badger's Who was Badger? and Kenneth Brooks' An Affirming Flame are welcome contributions to an improved understanding of our past and how this past has influenced the present. But, there is a dearth of contemporary material which depicts the breadth of the field in a comprehensive form while pointing to common concerns.

Consequently, the ICAE project afforded an opportunity to present in a systematic way a number of case studies which for the unfamiliar would hopefully provide some insight into adult education as it is experienced and practiced in Australia today. While there is no doubting the importance of formal schooling and tertiary studies, clearly, adult migrant education, continuing professional education, women's access programs , adult basic and literacy education, programs for older adults, agricultural extension and so on, are fundamental to the fabric of society and to its well-being and that of its members. This publication is thus intended to contribute to the edification of those whose understanding of the field is less than substantial or whose contact has been limited.

The decision to proceed with such a publication was made for a second and equally important reason. Adult education is both a field of social practice and an area of disciplined enquiry. Each cannot progress without the other. In the last decade, both the number of institutions and the range of formally-accredited courses in adult education have increased markedly. The curricula for such courses rely heavily, though not exclusively, on overseas material. It was deemed essential that students of adult education in Australia should readily be able to examine a diverse range of programs in an Australian

context. Migrant education courses or educational programs for the elderly, for instance, are not unique to Australia and may be found in many other countries. This may also be said of Aboriginal education programs since Lapplanders, Inuit people, and Native South Americans share similar experiences. However, the social, economic, political, demographic and historical forces which have and still influence and shape adult education in Australia are unique at least to the extent that Australia is distinguishable as a nation from the United States, the United Kingdom, Nepal or Fiji. Thus, it was felt that the critical concerns involved in any adult education program - philosophy, instructional methods, needs assessment procedures, views on the nature of the participant, ideas regarding social change, purpose and so on - should be presented within the context of Australian society. This publication endeavours to do so.

Two additional reasons for this publication are related to the above. Firstly, the many teachers of adults and organisers of adult education programs work at the 'coal face' and are concerned principally with helping individuals and developing society in the 'here and now'.

There is a great deal of commitment, involvement, and personal integrity. These are not terms frequently encountered or for that matter today often countenanced but they depict the attitude of the vast majority of adult education practitioners in Australia. This is, perhaps, the most fundamental characteristic of Australian adult education today. Many, however, have limited opportunities to examine the work of their colleagues and share experiences. Any depiction of like or dissimilar programs, should inevitably aid comparison and critique and improve communication and practice.

Secondly, and related to the foregoing, few practitioners have the opportunity to describe and reflect upon their work in their own terms in the public domain. In the course of preparing this publication, contributions additional to those of the ICAE project were sought in order to extend the range of case studies to cover more fully the field in Australia. In each case, contributors were asked to provide a program description incorporating a brief historical and contextual framework, the process in terms of management structure and teaching methods employed, factors which influenced the program, evaluative comments regarding the program outcomes, and overviews with respect to any of these or present or future concerns. By this means, an attempt was made to provide a comparative framework for readers. At the same time, every attempt has been made to ensure that the publication reflects in an accurate and honest way the writings of those involved. Where we have failed, we accept responsibility; where we have succeeded, it is due to the work of those so central to furthering adult education in Australia.

N.S.W. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE HOME STUDY PROGRAMME.

Barry O'Neill

Farm Management Course Supervisor
N.S.W. Department of Agriculture

INTRODUCTION

The Farm Management Home Study Programme is conducted by the N.S.W. Department of Agriculture for farmers and others interested in agriculture to improve on-farm efficiency and productivity. The courses offered are the Farm Management Certificate Course (over two years) and the Farm Office Management Course (one year). As from 1987 students have been able to select their own programme based on units from both courses. The programme is designed on distance learning techniques, enabling students to study in their own home, in their own time and at their own pace. The courses are available to anyone over the age of 18 years regardless of their location or previous educational attainment.

Brief History of Courses

In 1968-69 Mr. Col Woodard, then an Extension Officer with the N.S.W. Department of Education, assisted by Area and District Rural Youth Officers, and Mr. Jack Makeham, a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Business Management at the University of New England, designed a course in Farm Management to be based on correspondence teaching methods supplemented by residential schools and local tutorials.

The Commonwealth Department of Primary Industries was approached to fund a training course for extension officers throughout Australia in Farm Management and in 1969 the course was conducted at the Marcus Oldham College in Victoria. Initially the Farm Management course was sponsored by the Rural Youth Council and was approved by the University of New England and the Department of Education. The first students were enrolled in 1970.

Rural Youth Officers were transferred to the Department of Agriculture in 1973 and the course is now offered under the auspices of that department through the Division of Agricultural Services.

The staff of the Faculty of Agricultural Economics from the University of New England provided course notes for the Farm Planning and Business Analysis strand. They also assisted with the twice-yearly residential schools at Armidale. Revision and review of printed course materials were undertaken by Extension Officers.

The Correspondence Courses Production Unit (C.C.P.U.) was established in 1981 when the production function of the programme was moved from Head Office of the Department of Agriculture to the C.B. Alexander College, Tocal. The C.C.P.U. is responsible for the production and distribution of course notes, and the financial management of the programme, together with maintenance of student records.

The Farm Management Course is intended for men and women who have, or expect to have, farm management responsibilities. The course is offered at two levels on a part-time basis. Students must enrol initially in Level I and then move into Level II the following year. The Level I course runs from March to November and is intended to introduce students to the basic theory of Farm Management. In Level II of the course greater emphasis is given to the practical aspects of farm resource and financial management.

If the student is interested in pursuing the programme through the two levels and receiving a Farm Management Certificate then all prescribed course activities are compulsory. A student not interested in certification may pursue the programme as an educational service in which case, all course activities are optional.

The course activities that must be satisfactorily completed for award of a certificate are:

i. the keeping of on-farm records using the Farm Record Book prepared by the Agricultural Business Research Institute, University of New England, Armidale;

ii. the completion of a Farm Management Report on their own property and being interviewed on that report by a representative of the Division of Marketing and Economics, N.S.W. Department of Agriculture; and

iii. the presentation of a Farm Case Study for assessment by staff of the Department of Agricultural Economics and Business Management, University of New England, Armidale.

The Farm Management Report consists of detailing the farm financial performance during the last farm production year. This includes preparing accounts on Operating Profit, Net Cash Flow, Assets and Liabilities and Change in Working Accounts. It involves interpreting these accounts and explaining the student's performance, and stating goals for the future including an outline of a proposed change to the farm and cash flow. Finally, the report involves the students in preparing this three to five-year cash flow budget and judging whether the proposed change is a reasonable investment.

In 1975 Mr. Nelson Wallace, an Extension Officer with the Department of Agriculture, recognised the need for a properly structured course in Farm Office Management techniques tailored to the needs of

both farmers and farmers' spouses to improve their efficiency in the farm office, to help them to maintain effective farm records, and to facilitate efficient financial decision-making. The course began in 1977 with an initial enrolment of 40 students. In 1978 Mr. Wallace attended a working party at the Orange Agricultural College where a revision and review of the course content was undertaken. The College staff assisted with the revision.

The Farm Office Management course is a one-year, part-time course aimed at teaching simple and efficient farm office procedures of recording, accounting and financial analysis. The course runs from March to November and 12 units of study are undertaken in that period. An Autumn and Spring two-day school is conducted during the period. All assignments in the Farm Office Management Course are self-correcting and answers are supplied to students so they may monitor their own progress.

PROCESS

The main teaching medium for the courses is print material which is issued periodically from March to November. All course units follow the standard instructional design of: preview (introduction to the unit); objectives (for the unit); overview (unit structure); content (teaching material); review (revision and summary of the unit); and follow-up (activities). Follow-up activities aim at providing students with opportunities to apply the knowledge and skills learnt during the unit, and enable a measure of achievement of the objectives. In some units, the follow-up activities are conducted and discussed at residential schools or tutorials.

Several units contain audio-cassettes in addition to the printed notes. The cassettes are designed to be interactive with the notes thereby providing a secondary teaching medium. This balanced approach to teaching will be expanded with the production of more cassettes.

The distance learning material is supplemented by residential schools and tutorials. The residential school programme is arranged to cover most of the aspects of the year's programme and designed to meet the needs of the students.

Week-long schools are conducted at the University of New England in May of each year for Level I. These students also attend a two-day, on-farm case study in the central west of N.S.W. in August and a weekend school in October. Level II students attend a five-day school at the Sydney University Farms at Camden, a further five-day school at the University of New England in July and a four-day course at the Orange Agricultural College.

The Level I May residential at the University of New England embraces revision of the notes issued to that time. It includes work in farm planning and business analysis, lectures and discussions in

agricultural technology and discussion groups on problems of importance to farmers. The week's course should result in each student understanding fully all work presented during the year and prepare them, through farm budgeting exercises, for the on-farm case study in August.

The Level II February residential school at the Sydney University Farms prepares the students for the final year of the course and further strengthens their knowledge on the economic concepts of farm management. Level II students revisit the University of New England in July and here the final, assessed, on-farm case study is conducted.

Lecturers at the residentials are drawn from University and College personnel, advisory staff from the Department of Agriculture, farmer co-operators, accountants, bankers and solicitors.

An introductory on-farm case study is offered to Level I students in August. This is supplemented by a further case study conducted during the February Level II residential and a final study during the Level II July School.

Tutorials are conducted in local areas and they are co-ordinated by contact officers. They include discussion groups, case studies, field days and farm visits. Various aspects of the course are normally covered by tutorials. For example, in April it is recommended that the contact officer arranges an overview of farm records and budgeting techniques, and an explanation of terms. In June arrangements are normally made for an economist from the Department to cover budgets, cash flows, partial budgets, etc. Again, in August, cash flow budgeting and the use of the Agricultural Business Research Institute (A.B.R.I.) record book are examined and, finally, in the November tutorial, farm budget exercises.

Farm Management Discussion Group

Farm Office Management students are invited to attend two, two-day schools held in Autumn and Spring each year. These courses are designed to cover the students' work during the year and they are conducted at various centres throughout the State.

The C.C.P.U. monitors the educational and training needs of farmers. The sources of information are advisory staff from the Department of Agriculture, farmer and farmer groups, and present and past students. Information provided by these sources provides the basis for development and amendment of the Home Study Program.

Advisory Officers are professional officers of the Department of Agriculture who specialise in Plant Industries, Animal Production, Marketing and Economics, Animal Health and Farm Mechanisation. They are located throughout N.S.W. and work within the rural community. These officers, because of their working relationship with farmers, identify areas of need as seen by them in the rural sector and are a primary source of comment for the Home Study Program.

Within rural industries, farmer and farmer groups contribute to needs analysis primarily through the use of questionnaires and discussion groups.

Students, at the completion of each residential school and at the completion of the course, are requested to comment by questionnaire survey on the completed course and identify new subject areas. Past students are approached to comment on perceived needs and on proposed curriculum changes. Recommendations for amending the course content, based on needs analysis or validation of course units, are forwarded to the Curriculum Committee.

The Home Study Curriculum Committee consists of the Principal Officer (Education and Training), the Principal of the C.B. Alexander College (Tocal), the Manager of the C.C.P.U. and the Farm Management and Farm Office Management Course Supervisors. This group authorises changes to the curriculum based on the input of the above sources and recommmendations of the C.C.P.U. Once the program is determined at a curriculum meeting, the objectives are specified and different agencies (Department of Agriculture staff, University staff, accountants, solicitors, etc.) are approached to write the course notes. Development of the course material is done in consultation with the C.C.P.U. and Course Supervisors to ensure objectives are met and optimum instructional design is achieved.

The program is evaluated by students through the regular issue of questionnaires. These are collated and the results used to amend the program where necessary. An operations committee consisting of Department of Agriculture Regional Officers concerned with the program, together with the Manager, C.C.P.U., the Course Supervisors and the Principal Officer (Education and Training) meet annually. This group reviews the activities conducted during the year and plans future schools, tutorials, etc., incorporating any necessary improvements or alterations.

The program is publicised through a variety of channels. Brochures are distributed to all Department of Agriculture officers in N.S.W. and at major Field Days, Agricultural Shows, Trading Banks and by direct mail to primary producers. A community service announcement is screened on all country TV stations. Radio and rural press are approached and issued with press releases and advertisements. At key locations in N.S.W. course contact officers have been established. Their function is to co-ordinate local activities as the course tutors and to maintain contact with each student. One critical function of these officers is to contact students early in the year and endeavour to enthuse the students with the course. The contact officers provide the "personal touch" between the program and the student; this tutorial role is an important way of maintaining student motivation during the year.

OUTCOMES

The objectives of the program were determined by the Home Study Courses Policy Committee. The committee consists of representatives from the various Divisions of the N.S.W. Department of Agriculture together with the Executive Director (Research and Advisory Services) or his nominee, the Course Supervisors, Principal Officer (Education and Training) and the Manager of the C.C.P.U.

The Level I units in Farm Management consist of the gathering of farm records, accounting, budgets and budget techniques, cash flow and development budgeting, crop and livestock management together with elective unit study. These electives cover such topics as cereals, beef, sheep, dairy, dairy goats, citrus, grapes and vegetable production, animal health, soils, irrigation and drought management, computers in agriculture, sources of farm finance and taxation. Level II of the course covers the economic principles of production, machinery economics, investment analysis and decision-making and marketing. Students may again select from the elective units.

Farm Office Management deals with office administration procedures, gathering of farm records, accounting, budgeting, cash flow and development budgeting, profit and loss balance sheet, farm capital use, computers, taxation and farm finance.

The need for farmers to improve their knowledge and skills of farm management techniques and principles has never been greater and the Department recognises that it can play a vital role in satisfying these needs. There is little doubt that the two courses offered are helping to improve the general standard of farmer education and awareness and are therefore aiding agricultural production in N.S.W. No other course offers the farmer such relevant training by distance teaching methods.

The Farm Management Course is designed for men and women working on, or interested in the land who have, or expect to have, farm managerial responsibilities. Sound managerial ability, which involves well-informed judgement, is necessary in today's highly competitive farming. The broad

objectives of the course are to help improve the general standard of farmer education, to encourage sound managerial practices, to develop an understanding of the economic and environmental realities of farm enterprises, and to facilitate effective managerial decision-making and planning strategies among farm managers, farm owners, and people interested in agriculture. The specific objectives of the Farm Management Course are to:

i. develop and encourage an awareness and appreciation of the need for sound management principles and procedures in the physical, financial and environmental aspects of farm enterprises;

ii. introduce students to the theory of farm management and to teach those skills and procedures necessary for effective farm planning and business analysis;

iii. encourage and direct the practical application of those skills of farm management by students in their own particular circumstances; and

iv. introduce students to the significant elements of agricultural technology and to encourage an appreciation and understanding of the farm biosphere.

The objectives of the Farm Office Management course are to provide a course aimed at improving the farm office and farm business skills of farmers, farmers' spouses, and others concerned with and interested in agriculture. The specific objectives of the course are to develop the following skills and knowledge:

i. setting up an office to handle a large volume of paper-work quickly and efficiently, recording, storing and retrieving written information;

ii. procedures relating to the effective processing of inward and outward correspondence;

iii. knowledge enough to be able to record the physical and financial records to the stage where the accountant has the necessary information to complete the taxation return including reconciliation of the cash book with the bank statement;

iv. sufficient knowledge and skills to be able to interpret the information provided by the accountant - usually a profit and loss statement and balance sheet;

v. supplying accurate information to people and organisations as it is necessary for conducting the farm business, e.g., bankers, accountants, stock and station agents, breed societies and statisticians; and

vi. the processing of all farm records for general management and taxation purposes and the use of those records to measure farm performance and aid in decision-making.

It is difficult to objectively measure the benefits to students because of the general aims of the program and the diversity of interests of the learners. However, correspondence from them and informal comments indicate that the program is highly successful. Favourable comments from well-known educators have been forthcoming and documented over the years.

INPUTS

Total enrolments in the Farm Management Level I course have increased from 52 in 1970 to 256 in 1986 with a total of 2431 during the period. Level II participants have increased from 23 in 1971 to 78 in 1986 with an overall total of 580. Participants in the Farm Office Management course have increased from 40 in 1977 to some 210 in 1986. The vast majority of students in the Farm Office Management course are either farm owners (56%) or partners of farms (27%) with sons/daughters third (11%). In the Farm Management course, the figures are; owners (34%), sons and daughters (36%) and partners (17%), with the balance consisting of managers, trainees, employees, and shares/lessees (13%).

An analysis of the nature of the farm enterprises of learners in the Farm Office Management course reveals the following diversity: beef and wool crops (38%); beef cattle (22%); wool and grains (19%); beef, lamb and grains (9%); dairying (7%); goats and sheep (3%); and vegetables and orchards (2%). Similar figures are found in the Farm Management course.

The age of participants in the Farm Office Management course ranges from 16 to 70 with a mean of 36 and in the Farm Management course from 17 to 59 with a mean of 30 years of age.

There are two clerical and two professional staff located in the C.C.P.U. at Tocal. Additional staff are employed on contract as required. Staff have also been utilized under the Youth Employment Scheme and the Commonwealth Employment Program. There are two supervisors involved in the program. The Advisory Officer (Courses) at East Maitland spends approximately 80 percent of his time with the Farm Management Course. Many of the face-to-face responsibilities of the course rest with him and he is responsible for the organisation and conduct of the residential schools and tutorials. The Regional Group Advisory Officer at Orange is course supervisor for the Farm Office Management Course and approximately 45 percent of his time is spent with details involving the Spring and Autumn schools. He also assists with Farm Management residentials, tutorials and case studies. There are 24 contact officers located in different geographic areas of N.S.W. Their association with the course has been outlined earlier.

A nominal fee is charged for the two courses, it being sufficient to cover the cost of printed texts, farm record books, and other materials that are required by students. Salaries, travel allowances, housing, office furniture and equipment, power, telephones, repairs and maintenance, stationery, and printing and postage are supplied by the N.S.W. Department of Agriculture. Technical and Further Education (T A.F.E.) funding is sought annually for special projects and equipment.

In 1982, student evaluations indicated that many only wished to do the course as an educational activity and were not interested in certificates. Others indicated they only intended being involved with the course for 12 months. This led to two major changes in the program. It was decided to condense the course from three to two years, do away with formal assessable assignments, and abolish the examination system at the completion of Level I. Certification requirements for students doing the course formally are now listed as completion of the A.B.R.I. record book in Level 1, assessment by interview on the Farm Management Report and the assessment by marking of the "On-Farm Case Study". These changes were introduced in 1983.

Difficulty has always been encountered in the Agricultural Technology segment of the program in finding suitable texts. From 1970 until the books went out of print in 1985-86, J.A. Sutherland's "Introduction to Agriculture" and "Introduction to Animal Farms" were issued to students. Another text which went out of print was "Intensive Pasture Production", edited by Professor Alec Lazenby and Dr. F. G. Swain. This lack of resource material necessitated a change in the program.

The Agricultural Technology strand of the course from 1987 will be replaced with a series of elective units covering soils, crops, pastures, animal production, horticulture, tropical crops, irrigation, agricultural law and drought management, etc. The units contain all reference material and do not rely on textbooks.

Another structural change is the development of common units in financial management for both courses. This will allow Farm Office Management students, with some slight unit additions, to enrol in Level II of the Farm Management Course after completing the 12-month Farm Office Management Course.

Elective units will be available for people not enrolled in the course. If a producer wishes, he can simply purchase the beef strand or the soils course, for example, and not be committed to doing the complete program. This is an indication of the flexibility of the program which is based on student needs.

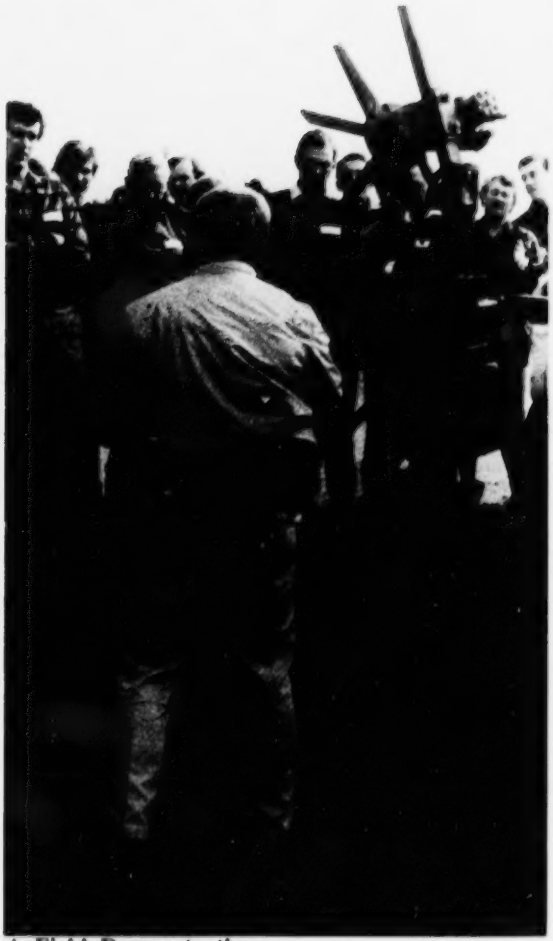
INFLUENCES

One of the unique features of this program from the onset has been the use of Departmental Advisory Officers in the field as tutors and program organisers. These officers are the visible and, therefore, immediately accountable members of the course team. They are in routine contact with course clients and are therefore more aware of client needs, demands, frustrations and difficulties. Staff at the C.C.P.U. have skills in word processing, graphic design, audio production and the preparation of educational materials. All printed material issued by the C.C.P.U. is self-explanatory, well-structured and contains explicit behavioural objectives.

The Home Study Program receives positive support from the Minister for Agriculture, Lands and Forests, together with the Director-General, executive members and other senior staff of the N.S.W. Department of Agriculture. Regional Directors of Agriculture, together with Regional Directors of Advisory Services, strongly support the courses by releasing staff from regional duties to assist at residential schools, on-farm case studies and tutorials.

The N.S.W. Department of Agriculture supports the program in many ways, such as staffing, salaries, travel allowances, postage, printing, paper, equipment, accommodation, and the moral support of the executive and the direct support of Professional, Clerical and General Division staff in N.S.W.

The interaction which occurs among students at residential schools plays a very large part in the success of the course. Social gatherings are conducted at the conclusion of each day, and sometimes continue until the early hours of the morning. It is most interesting to observe the interest students take in the enterprises of their fellow students. An obvious plus to the course curriculum is the vast array of specialists within the department who are available to assist with the writing of course notes, to help prepare material and to participate at residentials and tutorials. Radio and TV stations in country N.S.W. assist the program by advertising the program free of charge as a community service.



A Field Demonstration

The production unit (C.C.P.U.) at Tocal is understaffed and as new study units are being developed, increased demand is placed on their time. There is a strong case for an additional professional officer. However, with departmental staff ceilings and other considerations, this does not appear possible. Though the involvement of Departmental officers is an advantage (because of their credibility with the rural community) they have many other duties outside the Home Study Programme. From time to time the writing of units by Departmental staff is delayed because of these commitments. Because of lack of training in education some staff are unskilled at preparing learning material.

Most course students are engaged in full-time farming and some are prevented from attending residential schools because of seasonal activities, such as shearing, sowing, and harvesting. Some learners have to employ additional labour to allow their attendance at residentials schools. Other factors, such as drought, flood and fire prevent some students attending residentials.

In addition, some individual students living in isolated areas have difficulty in attending tutorials. Lastly, some students have not had the opportunity to receive a full school education. In their case, the residential schools are most important. However, it is found that for this group, if they do not or cannot attend residentials, etc., they fall by the wayside.

OTHER

The Farm Management Distance Teaching Programme is based on three key movements identified as being of increasing significance for education in Australia in the next quarter century:

i. the growing acceptance of the idea of lifelong learning, continuing education and recurrent vocational training;

ii. the establishment of universality of access to education facilities by people of all ages and conditions regardless of their location and distance from established institutions and agencies; and

iii. the recognition of experiential learning programs; that is, the movement away from traditional, formal, educational institutions and processes.

Advisory officers of the Department of Agriculture play a major role in the delivery and face-to-face aspects of the course at residential schools and tutorials. Farmers identify with them and because of the credibility of the officers the program is held in high esteem by the farmers. This gives the Home Study Program a large advantage over the brick and mortar courses offered by T.A.F.E. and other tertiary institutions.

I wish to acknowledge Glenn Rhodes, Ex-Manager of C.C.P.U. and Warwick Morre, Manager, C.C.P.U. for their contributions to the above.

SELF-HELP ADULT EDUCATION: THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE AT THE BRISBANE C.A.E.

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INTRODUCTION

The University of the Third Age (U3A) has developed into a global adult education success story since its inception in France in 1972. In less than 15 years, with little or no financial assistance or top-level organisational co-ordination, the movement has spread through Europe, the Americas, Australasia and parts of Asia.

The U3A began in Australia in 1985 after an earlier public meeting in Melbourne had attracted support for the establishment of a number of pilot U3A campuses throughout the city. The concept spread rapidly under the sponsorship of the Australian Council on the Ageing, first in the State of Victoria, then through many other parts of Australia. In late 1986, under the combined sponsorship of the Brisbane College of the Ageing the idea of beginning a Brisbane U3A campus was investigated at a public meeting. From the enthusiastic support of the more than 400 older citizens who assembled to hear about the "new" concept of self-help education for older learners, the U3A in conjunction with the BCAE was founded. This case study will consider aspects of the development of the U3A and BCAE in its inaugural year.

PROCESS

As is the case with any Australian U3A campus the great strength of the U3A and BCAE lies in its do-it-yourself philosophical underpinning. Such an approach maximises opportunities for the continued use of the enormous pool of skills and knowledge possessed by the elderly, and minimises the dependence on professional educators and outside funding, which characterises most adult education programs. The tutors of the more than 40 courses currently available to Brisbane members are volunteer members who have an interest in a subject, be it the study of Chinese, Memory Reconditioning, the History of Greece, Yoga, Organic Gardening, Wood Turning, or Computing. They develop courses and teach these in any way, and to any level they wish, often running courses from their own homes or convenient suburban halls. Since teaching is provided without payment by members, for members, there are no fees other than those for course materials or perhaps for the hire of a hall or special facilities.

Payment of the annual membership fee of $25 (half for pensioners) entitles members to enrol in as many courses as they wish.

A Management Committee, elected by the members at an annual general meeting, operates under a constitution which has been approved by the membership. This committee meets monthly in a room provided free of charge by the BCAE, which serves as both office and occasional U3A tutorial room. A Programs, Publications and Venues subcommittee (PP&V) uses information from the members' initial registration form to identify possible tutors and determine what courses are likely to be of greatest interest. Once members have been found who will run courses, a suitable low-cost venue is obtained. Frequently, rather than use a suburban church hall or similar facility, tutors choose to run courses for six to eight people from their own homes where a more friendly and informal atmosphere usually develops. Since one of the important reasons given by members for joining the U3A and BCAE is the opportunity to meet with stimulating people and make new friends, small classes may be preferred to the larger courses run from Community halls. A disadvantage, however, is that home locales are usually quite inconvenient for participants who wish to attend from different parts of the city.

Course details are publicised in newsletters which are produced by members of the Management Committee and mailed five or six times a year. Enrolment on a first-come, first-served basis is made by phoning the respective tutor. Some criticism of this enrolment method has occurred since not all newsletters are delivered by the postal service on the same day, and the most popular courses are rapidly filled. However, since the U3A office is staffed on a purely voluntary basis it is likely that the method of decentralised enrolments will continue until an alternative system, costing little or nothing, can be suggested. A number of tutors have partly resolved the problem by keeping waiting lists, with those who have earlier missed out on the course being given priority in repeat offerings.

Tutors are entitled to recoup minimal course costs from participants through a small levy which is advertised in the newsletter along with course details. The levy is not a tuition payment and would not normally amount to more than 50 cents to a dollar per person per day, to cover items such as phone calls, tutors' travelling, photocopying, and perhaps light refreshments. In material dependent courses, such as art and photography, costs are somewhat higher. Apart from the personal satisfaction and the (usually) lavish thanks from participants, the only reward the tutors receive is an afternoon tea run in their honour by the Management Committee.

In addition to course details, the newsletters contain a diversity of articles of interest to the older learner and details of other activities in Brisbane which may be of benefit to the membership. A newly-formed social committee is developing low cost activities of the "picnic in the park" variety as well as advertising group membership discounts to theatres and other cultural events. The development of a strong program of social activities is a high priority of the Management Committee which recognises the importance of a social network amongst older persons, particularly for those who live alone.

An important recent innovation is a weekly radio program hosted by one of the U3A and BCAE members which features a variety of interviews and talks. Early interviews have concentrated on the U3A and its activities in order to familiarise more people with the concept of the movement. Later it is intended to focus on more general issues which are important to aged listeners. Initial reports indicate that this is likely to be a very popular service, not only with members, but with the aged infirm who are unable to easily take part in U3A activities.

OUTCOMES

The U3A and BCAE campus is typical of other Australian USAs in that it is a learning community organised by and for other people who are in active retirement or, in the words of the French, in the "third age of life". Although no pre-determined age is necessary for membership the majority of members are over 60 years old. A small but increasing number of members comes from the 40 and 50 year old group, perhaps reflecting the societal trend towards early retirement (both voluntary and forced).

Just as age is no barrier to membership, prior learning experiences are likewise of no importance. There are no prerequisites for participation and there is no assessment associated with any of the courses. Members' formal education ranges from primary school through more than 40 years of professional education involvement.

Two recurrent problems await satisfactory solution. The first concerns the recruitment of more tutors to offer more courses to satisfy the requests of a growing membership. In an attempt to encourage more would-be tutors to volunteer, a three-hour course involving the determination of course objectives, development of resources, communication skills and methods of delivery, was recently sponsored by the Management Committee, using a paid educator. Although 15 members registered for the course only six actually attended. The lack of public transportation to the venue where the Saturday morning course was held was reportedly the reason for the poor attendance. It is likely that the course will be offered regularly from a more central location since those who attended rated the course as valuable.

The second problem, which is closely related to the first, involves finding ways of offering courses in locales which are more convenient for the many members who are reliant on public transportation. This problem is being addressed in two ways by the Management Committee. A room within which courses may be run from the first term in 1988 has been reserved in the City Hall. Although this move will still involve considerable travel by most, the City Hall is at the hub of all major bus routes, which are subsidised for pensioners, thereby allowing both tutors and participants easier access to one important central site. The other potential solution involves the establishment of U3A and BCAE branches throughout the city. One such branch has already been established in a central suburb with free access to a large hall and smaller teaching rooms.

The pros and cons of whether other city groups would be better served by forming autonomous U3A campuses or developing as branches of the U3A and BCAE are fully aired with interested groups and individuals. In the interests of diversity, and to promote the "feeling of belonging", the former may be preferable. However, most groups with whom decentralisation has been discussed, initially wish to remain part of the U3A and BCAE which provide access to important resources which independent groups would find difficult, or excessively expensive, to duplicate.

INPUTS

Although the underlying philosophy of U3A must remain a self-help one, groups are frequently assisted by a benevolent educational body which provides the advice, facilities and infrastructure needed to permit operation at minimal cost to members. The BCAE provided initial direct financial assistance until the Brisbane movement became financially autonomous and continues to provide considerable indirect support. An office, which serves as an occasional U3A teaching area, telephone, and other office equipment are freely provided. In addition, the College provides subsidised printing, computerised record-keeping and monthly financial statements, and access by members to the College libraries, as well as other indirect subsidies which are essential in keeping costs to members to a minimum. The College is represented on the Management Committee by a non-voting academic whose principal role is to provide advice and assistance where necessary, but not to influence the philosophical direction steered by the Management Committee.

Voluntary tutors provide the education activities which underpin the U3A movement. There is always a need for more tutors, offering a greater variety of courses, in different locations throughout the city. Some local adult education agencies have indicated a preparedness to run courses for the U3A at nominal cost and, in the case of specialised courses, such as computer education for older learners, the Management Committee has been pleased to advertise courses in the newsletters. However, the Committee remains alert to problems which could change the essential do-it-yourself philosophy of the U3A if courses offered by professional educators become a part of the general course offerings.

The egalitarian nature of the U3A and the need for a low-cost adult education organisation geared specifically to the wants of older learners in part accounts for the very rapid growth of the U3A and BCAE. In less than one year of operation the membership has grown to over 500. However, considerable credit for the successful development of the campus undoubtedly rests with the efforts of the elected Management Committee. In addition to meeting monthly to co-ordinate overall activities each of the Committee members is independently active in daily tasks such as office administration, publicity and the many other activities essential for the successful operation of large voluntary movement. Had there been more "talkers" than "doers" on the Management Committee the U3A and BCAE undoubtedly could not have developed to its present level of effectiveness.

EVALUATION

No formal evaluation of the U3A and BCAE has yet taken place since the organisation has been in operation for less than a year. However, an important indirect indication of whether the promise of the movement actually meets most of the expectations held by the membership will soon be able to be gauged from membership renewal records. If there is a high percentage of non-renewals the Management Committee will interview a number of ex-members by telephone in an attempt to determine what the major reasons are for their failure to rejoin.

Any problems which are directly concerned with courses are initially handled by the PP&V subcommittee and subsequently discussed by the Management Committee. Since the success of the teaching program is entirely dependent on the good will of voluntary tutors, many of whom have no prior teaching experience, it is deemed inappropriate to introduce any discrete, formal, course evaluation at this stage. However, the Management Committee is sensitive to the need for courses to be well developed and presented and has initiated a number of activities which enable tutors and potential tutors to reflect on their methods. These activities include written advice in the newsletter on teaching and planning of courses appropriate to the needs of older learners, a short course for tutors offered by a professional educator, and the bringing together of tutors in a social environment, in part to promote informal discussion about various course successors and failures.

Quantitative data about some of the characteristics of U3A and BCAE members will soon be available. The Management Committee recently helped develop a questionnaire which was distributed to a random sample of 100 members, addressing issues relating to their impressions on the U3A, their immediate expectations of U3A, their prior educational backgrounds and educational participation patterns, and their current educational interests' profiles. At the time of writing this case study the data had not been analysed.

An important reason for beginning the systematic compilation of similar data by all U3A groups has been highlighted by leading Australian adult educators. In their view, the present lack of even the most rudimentary participation data relating to the rapidly growing aged learner group in Australian society is a substantial obstacle to the development of a reasoned case for a fairer allocation of dwindling financial resources for the aged learner. With the depth of talent to be found amongst all U3A membership, Australian U3As appear to be as well placed as any other group to argue for the rights of the entire aged sector, once they have access to factual data.

INFLUENCES

Older adults form the fastest growing sector of the total population of many countries. Early this century a life expectancy of about 50 was common in most Western industrialised countries. Today the normal life span in these same countries has arisen to above 70. In Australia the over 60s population is expected to double from 1.35 million, as it was in 1971, to be 2.62 million in 2001. The sheer increase in numbers of active retired persons is undoubtedly an important factor contributing to the success of the U3A. However, other important influences also need to be considered. These include an increase in general educational backgrounds of older adults (success breeds success), a breaking down of society's negative perceptions of old age, and an awareness by the aged themselves that retirement from work or family commitments should not signal the need for retirement from active life. A number of comments written by members in the U3A and BCAE questionnaire reinforce this last point. These indicate that members had been waiting for the arrival of a low-cost movement like U3A to provide them with active aged learners of similar disposition.

The gender mix in U3A and BCAE is interesting - 86 per cent female and 14 per cent male. Although the ratio of female to male in the general population increases markedly above the age of 60, this factor does not account for the very low percentage of males who have joined. Possible causes for the gender imbalance in Brisbane and ways of overcoming it need to be investigated. As other Australian groups develop membership statistics it will be interesting to see whether similar trends emerge.

One of the negative factors which may have had an influence on the current membership of the U3A and BCAE appears to be associated with the name University of the Third Age and, perhaps, with its affiliation in Brisbane with a higher education institution. Despite wide publicity, and a full description of the philosophy of U3A some members joined expecting to enrol in formal courses leading to an award. Although a number of these members will not renew their memberships there are indications that others who had originally held similar misapprehensions are happy with the U3A philosophy and intend to continue as members.

The term "University" in the title is unfortunate, however, for a more important reason. Earlier, the fundamental principles underlying the U3A in Australia were outlined, giving rise to the view that the movement is intended to be seen as egalitarian - anyone may join, regardless of age or educational background. However, the membership survey shows that a considerable majority of members (quantitative results are not yet available) have participated in courses beyond their formal schooling period. These results reflect the fact found in participation studies overseas that those who enrol in programs for older adults are perennial learners. If the U3A and BCAE is to attract the aged learner whose perception of education was coloured by unfortunate school experiences many years ago, any suggestion of educational elitism must be removed.

The Management Committee is sensitive to the above problems and avoids the term "university" in all its publicity, except when it is needed to explain the meaning of the title "U3A". For the foreseeable future, the links with BCAE will remain since the assistance provided by the College is seen to far outweigh the problem associated with the title. The creation of suburban branches of the U3A may be the best way of providing an environment which really is seen by older persons as being open to all.

OTHER

Although the annual membership fee of $25 (half for pensioners) is a little higher than that proposed by some U3A groups elsewhere in Australia, it was felt that a "healthy" financial base would be needed if members were not to have to divert their efforts in fund-raising in order to support the activities of the movement. The fact that more than 500 members have joined in the first year of operation (many are pensioners paying half fees) indicates that the fee has not been a major deterrent.

Members get good value for their money. They may participate in as many courses as they wish; they receive five or six bulky newsletters a year advertising courses, social activities and other details of benefit to members; they are insured whilst attending U3A courses; and, they have access to a member insurance scheme which saves them considerably more than the annual membership fee. Group discounts to cultural activities and other membership subsidies are being investigated.

The fact that the U3A began from a sound financial footing has allowed work to begin on two interesting extension activities. A course in memory conditioning run by two members is so popular that it has been repeated several times a term from as many different city locations as the tutor has the time and energy to attend. In the belief that many aged Australians would benefit from the course, funds have been set aside for the course to be developed as an audio cassette - print package to be sold Australia-wide as a U3A and BCAE publication. Other courses may be similarly packaged for the benefit of older learners elsewhere.

Early in 1988, a brief video explaining the ethos and operation of the U3A and BCAE will be prepared by members under the guidance of College students who will provide the technical expertise. The video will be circulated to nursing homes, retirement villages, churches and to other organisations having members who could benefit from joining U3A.

This case study epitomises the development of a dynamic, vital organisation in its inaugural year, yet it is very likely that there is little uniquely different about the U3A and BCAE that would not be reflected in most Australian U3As. The reason for the successful introduction of the U3A in most areas is that the movement does not rely on the energy and vision of a "change agent" but, rather, it utilises the abundant talents of a sector of the community which has the experience, knowledge, interest and enthusiasm to make a commonsense idea like U3A work.

MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT PROGRAMME

David Kerr and Chris Kerr
Couples for Marriage Enrichment, Australia

INTRODUCTION

Marriage Enrichment was born in the 1960s, and now includes a wide variety of programmes which endeavour to make good marriages better. Described in this presentation is one form of enrichment, which is based on the model developed by David and Vera Mace. Since its introduction to Australia in 1978, it has grown significantly in the Eastern states of Australia.

There is reference also to a more specialised programme for newlyweds, and a unique approach in marriage preparation for engaged couples (which is closely allied to the Mace model) conducted by the Family Life Movement of Australia.

PROCESS

The main method of teaching and learning is experiential. The first three hours of the workshop (also described as a retreat) is structured to provide an environment for couples to feel relaxed, and help them analyse, define and understand the present state of their marriage. Each couple is encouraged to identify the strengths of their relationship, as well as areas for possible growth. The experiential dimension is maintained as couples individually complete written exercises related to various aspects of their marriage relationship. Then, together, they privately dialogue about the differences they discover. Couples return to the group, where the leader couple facilitates the process of expressing experiences or issues couples may wish to make known to the group. This is achieved through 'open couple dialogue', where spouses talk to each other in front of the group. This process keeps the focus on experience, rather than opinions, and enables couples to identify and respond if they so choose. Self-disclosure and communication skills are modelled by the leader couple as they dialogue on aspects of their relationship, which is relevant to the needs of the group at that time, highlighting their feelings, reactions and behaviour. This process results in cross identification between couples, which provides new insights and learning.

There is little of the didactic approach used, with leader couples making only a brief presentation through the use of a whiteboard, film or video, as teaching aids, so that the experiential dimension of spouses interacting with each other, and couples within the group, is maintained.

The agenda for a retreat is determined by the participating couples. The leader couple has a range of exercises, based on specific areas dealt with in previous workshops. Such areas often include marriage strengths, assessing the potential of the relationship, communication levels, sex, handling conflict, dealing with anger, and goal-setting. The marriage enrichment programme is deliberately loosely constructed so the needs of each specific group can be addressed.

A Couple in the Marriage Enrichment Program

The Family Life Movement of Australia provides workshops for couples who have been married between six months and two years. This is a specialised form of workshop where the leader couple is more directive in forming the agenda, ensuring areas such as communication and conflict resolution are included. The format for the "Newlyweds Programme", as it is called, is considerably influenced by input from marriage counsellors.

The Family Life Movement also conducts workshops in Sydney for engaged couples. The content for this course is also largely determined by marriage educators and counsellors, with couples expressing their preferences, so that some attempt is made to tailor the programme to their expectations. Exercises help couples to focus on the kind of persons they are in the context of their family of origin, communication skills, handling conflict creatively, sex roles, contraception, sex, and their expectations of what they believe marriage will be like and what they hope it will provide for them. Exercises are completed by individuals and then discussed with the partner. Significant self-disclosure by the leader

couple especially of the early days of their marriage, provides couples with insights into their own relationship.

Couples who have a reasonably healthy relationship and some leadership ability are invited to attend a basic marriage enrichment training residential workshop covering four days. The initial emphasis is the development of each couple's relationship, using the dynamics of the usual retreat format. Later in the workshop, the emphasis moves to group leadership skills and preparation for conducting retreats.

After basic training, a couple is granted "provisional certification", after leading a retreat with positive feedback by the participating couples. After the minimum period of one year and leadership of five workshops with positive evaluations, a couple may apply for full certification. Couples are committed to reading and participating in various forms of marriage education to ensure their continuing development as leaders.

Participating couples in a marriage enrichment retreat, in the main, come from churches and community groups which are keen to promote marriage and the family. The Family Life Movement's pre-marriage workshop for engaged couples is recommended by clergy. A high percentage of engaged couples who undertake the pre-marriage workshop return within two years to experience the "Newlywed" workshop, and a majority return for a full retreat some years later. This progression provides a couple with opportunities to build on skills, identify with other couples, and have a support system through the important years of change from the single state to the early years of married life. These early years are seen as significant, as it is during this time that important patterns of interaction are laid down.

At the conclusion of an enrichment retreat couples usually elect to form a support group. This enables the shifts couples make during a workshop to be consolidated, and helps the spouses to make adjustments with the support of the group. Support groups usually continue for a 12-month period; however some become ongoing groups. Couples who encounter persistent 'blocks' in their communication are encouraged to seek marriage counselling. Several leader couples have spoken to groups, introducing them to the concept of marriage enrichment and enabling people to clarify any concerns or misconceptions they may have about the marriage enrichment process, so encouraging participation.

OUTCOMES

The objective of marriage enrichment is to "promote better marriages, starting with our own". At a workshop three objectives are placed before the group: i. to take a sincere and honest look at their

marriage, as it is now; ii. to identify directions in which they want their marriage to grow in the next twelve months; and, iii. to learn skills and gain insight so that future growth is possible.

These three objectives relate to the three essentials which David Mace expounds as being the basic theoretical framework for a happy marriage. The first of these is a commitment on the part of both partners to work together to build a relationship that will meet, as far as possible, the needs of both; and to make all possible behavioural changes that will further that end. All couples, by the conclusion of a retreat, will have committed themselves in writing to a growth plan with built in contracts for the following twelve months. The second essential is an effective communication system. It is recognised today that an intimate relationship cannot be sustained, without a continuing state of openness and honesty. The third essential is to make creative use of all conflicts that develop in the relationship. Couples are encouraged to avoid viewing conflict as evil or distasteful, but to recognise it has the potential if approached positively, to be used to bring couples closer together in their relationship. It is in fact a growth point in the relationship.

Ground rules for a retreat include the following. i. We share our experiences, not our opinions. ii. All participation is voluntary. iii. We avoid all diagnosing, analysing or advice-giving. iv. What is shared in the group is confidential. During the opening session, couples talk out and accept the objectives and ground rules. The ground rules provide a free and safe environment for couples to explore their relationship and identify with other couples.

There has not been any research undertaken in Australia on the benefits of marriage enrichment. (It has been well documented in the U.S.A.) Couples enter a retreat with expectations to meet a wide range of needs. Benefits to couples are determined through an evaluation by each spouse at the conclusion of the workshop. Irene and John Robson, National leader couple for C.M.E.A., reported that "84% of couples claim the experience has had a significant impact on their relationship, and of these 76% claim the impact was positive, whilst 8% expressed a threat to their relationship. Of the 76% who claimed a positive experience, benefits included:

i. a fresh impetus to talk and listen to each other verbally and non-verbally;

ii. realisation of the need to work on their relationship, shattering the myth that their marriage would strengthen "naturally";

iii. the ability to see differences and difficulties as means of growth;

iv. insight and strategies to deal with conflict positively; and

v. a new capacity to express feelings positively and negatively without blaming."

The Robsons also reported that couples who have maintained a high profile in support groups have shown marked signs of growth in their relationship.

INPUTS

Couples attending a marriage enrichment workshop come from every walk of life and from every age group. Three forms of workshops or retreats have evolved to meet the needs of couples.

The Full Residential Retreat requires 15 to 18 hours (Friday night through Sunday afternoon) with overnight residence for the development of an adequate sense of community. This is the most desirable form of experience and it is the most expensive because it includes accommodation and food. The maximum number of couples attending is limited to between eight and ten. Non- residential workshops over a similar time period are also desirable, reducing the cost factor, but the sense of community is also reduced.

The Mini-Retreat requires a 9- to 12-hour period, and usually commences Friday night and continues all day Saturday. Costs can be kept to a minimum by couples sleeping in their own homes overnight and providing their own lunch on Saturday. Couples form groups of three after private dialogue centred on written exercises, and there is brief feedback to the group. There is no open couple dialogue encouraged within the groups. There is no limitation to the number of couples attending.

Growth Groups which meet each week for a minimum time of two hours for 12 weeks also can be very effective. Whilst this format does not produce the intense experience of a weekend retreat, it does help couples to work on the workshop content in smaller bites. The maximum number of couples is between eight and ten.

Retreats are closed groups. However, some growth groups which have continued beyond the initial 12 weeks (becoming then a support group), have included a small number of couples who have expressed interest to join. Advertising material for the various forms of workshops stress the fact that the retreats are for couples who have a relatively good marriage and wish to have it improved. Couples who are experiencing real difficulties are encouraged to seek marriage counselling.

Leader couples come from many different backgrounds. However, due to the nature of the role, many marriage and family counsellors and others in the helping professions are attracted into leadership. Even so, many of their spouses have had no formal training outside their marriage enrichment

preparation and, like many other leader couples, become very effective with experience and the advanced training workshops provided by C.M.E.A. (Couples for Marriage Enrichment Australia).

C.M.E.A. is an autonomous body modelled on its American counterpart, A.C.M.E. (The Association for Couples in Marriage Enrichment), and is divided into State and Federal jurisdictions. Its main roles are training and the maintenance of its high standards by leader couples. It monitors leader couples with an evaluation form. Accreditation to lead retreats lapses if leader couples drop out for more than two years. They can regain accreditation by attending a basic training workshop.

Workshops are financed by the participating couples. Costs include accommodation (for residential retreats), meals and a levy of $5 per couple which goes to C.M.E.A. to provide for its continuing development. Leader couples are reimbursed for any travel costs or other expenses incurred, but make themselves available without charge. Leader couples finance their own basic training and any further activities they are involved with to develop their skills. The Federal Government has for some years subsidised the pre-marriage workshops conducted by The Family Life Movement, but, to-date, has not made funds available for marriage enrichment. There are some indications this may change.

Physical resources for a residential retreat include accommodation for each individual couple and a suitable room for the group to function. The leader couple have a range of printed exercises to stimulate couple interaction when appropriate. Some leader couples use films and videos but these are kept to a minimum to maintain the experiential dimension. Visual aids, in the form of charts, summarising communication skills, or illustrating the effects of the "love/anger cycle" as couples seek intimacy, are used.

EVALUATION

Dr. David Mace claims the real beginning of marriage enrichment was in Barcelona, Spain, where Father Gabriel Calvo started the Catholic organisation called Marriage Encounter in January 1962. His initial task was to work with delinquent children, but he came to believe success here was dependent upon the marital relationship in their homes. David and Vera Mace also believe the success of the marital dyad is basic to healthy functioning families. Their approach, like Marriage Encounter, spread world-wide and commenced in Australia with a visit by them in 1978 at the invitation of The Family Life Movement of Australia. (The Family Life Movement is a major Family Counselling Organisation, but includes areas such as sex education, marriage education, self-esteem, communication, group leadership, gestalt and rebuilding after divorce.) Churches, which are the only community organisations that work extensively with entire families and are concerned about the prevention of marital breakdown, were quick to seize the Mace model. Many denominations now have some form of marriage enrichment based on this approach.

There has not been any significant movement by other community groups yet to promote marriage enrichment. While some groups are offering marriage enrichment to couples, their approach is very different to what has been outlined in this paper, yet they are experimenting with and developing concepts that have promise. Currently there are some leader couples considering experimentation with retreats which focus on particular "life stages", such as the birth of the first child, the mid-years, first child commencing high school, when the children leave home, and retirement.

Whilst enrichment began with a sharp focus on the marital dyad acknowledging the primary relationship within the family, it now has been extended. When married couples learned to develop new skills in maintaining their relationship, it led to new interactions with their children, relatives and people in general. This is providing greater impetus for a whole range of activities, including family enrichment, parenting workshops, self-esteem groups and other activities associated with personal growth and interpersonal relationships. Marriage enrichment is like a door through which a couple pass into a new experience of viewing their relationship in a fresh way, leaving them the choice of making changes to their behaviour. The results have influenced their family and also the community.

The pre-marriage workshop conducted by The Family Life Movement had its beginnings over 20 years ago. In the early years the format took the form of a lecture presentation by various professional people including psychologists, doctors and lawyers. This format has changed over the years and now is essentially experiential with brief didactic input.

INFLUENCES

Major past influences which helped the development of marriage enrichment in Australia include the rising divorce rate in the 1970s and 1980s, which motivated couples to strengthen their marriage. Also important was the impact of the women's movement which challenged the authoritarian, male-dominated form of marriage, where sex roles were clearly defined and rigidly maintained from families of origin. Many men felt uneasy with wives wanting to redefine their roles, and have an equal, companionship style of marriage. Enrichment has helped couples to redefine their relationship and renegotiate their roles with greater flexibility.

Currently, the emergence of AIDS, and other sexually transmitted diseases is placing a new emphasis on the desirability of monogamous relationships. This must be seen as having an impact on marital relationships and be an impetus for couples to use programmes such as marriage enrichment to establish better marriages.

Another major force which has provided momentum for the establishment of marriage enrichment in Australia comes from the marriage counselling community with a conviction of the importance of

providing time and resources for preventative measures rather than concentrating solely on the remedial. Other positive influences include the following.

i. The existence of denominational and interdenominational church structures has been a significant means of communicating the message of marriage enrichment.

ii. Management seminars have shifted the emphasis from being task-oriented, to person-oriented and have given men approval to explore their 'work place' skills in their marriage and home environment.

iii. There is a growing acceptance and respect for marriage enrichment, which has survived, where other organisations associated with interpersonal growth have not developed.

iv. The growing effectiveness of C.M.E.A. in its administrative and promotional activities. (The first National Conference of C.M.E.A. was held in Sydney in June 1987.)

v. While social traditions have been in upheaval over the past 20 years, currently it appears there is a swing of the pendulum towards the more traditional values.

The major past influence which has hindered the development of enrichment is the belief that a marriage relationship (and particularly its problems) is private and should not be discussed outside the marriage. This cultural restriction has had even more potency when the suspicion of a 'clinical' or 'psychological' programme is added. Emphasis is made in advertising enrichment that it is not counselling but marriage education. Also, some couples fear that in exploring their relationship, they will find something 'radically wrong', and prefer to continue to live in ignorance of any possible threat to their relationship. Furthermore, the value systems of couples often rate the outlaying of money on enrichment retreats as being low in priority, compared with items such as the family car, holidays and, especially, sporting activities.

Lack of funds has been a major restriction in promoting enrichment in the wider community. At present all members give their time voluntarily, and a small office with paid secretarial staff would provide considerable impetus to the work in Australia.

Marriage enrichment, in its nine-year history, has experienced growth, and is anticipating considerable expansion in the future. C.M.E.A. has 70 trained leader couples. Four hundred and ten couples attended approved retreats in 1986. In addition, The Family Life Movement advises that in 1986, 33 couples attended the Newlyweds programme and 255 couples were involved in Pre-Marriage workshops in Sydney. Figures for 1987 will certainly exceed those of the previous year, with the demand for retreats far exceeding available leader couples. There is a growing sense of national identity.

A national log has been created. The first National Conference was organized in June 1987. Marriage enrichment is increasingly being recognised throughout the community and especially by clinical remedialists as making a major contribution towards strengthening marriage and family life in Australia.

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CARRINGBUSH LIBRARY: A PLACE TO BE

Marian Letcher
Carringbush Regional Library

INTRODUCTION

Historically, libraries have been places in the community which people have used to continue their learning. They are centres in the local community where people from all backgrounds come and share a range of facilities and resources.

Carringbush Regional Library was conceived as a total community service offering information, cultural and leisure services to the municipalities of Collingwood and Richmond. This service goes far beyond the limitations of traditional library services. The fact that this library is far more than a repository of books is reflected in the variety of informally- structured learning experiences catering for a range of learning styles organised by the library.

PROCESS

Since its inception over nine years ago the library has been a vehicle for critical consciousness in the community. Carringbush plays a role as cultural 'reflector' and agent for social change. Displays, walks, seminars and bus trips, especially of an historical and environmental nature, and discussions and concerts all focus attention and draw upon the learner's previous experience and thus encourage an experiential mode of learning. Some of the staff are involved, also, in a range of community committees fostering the development and enhancement of informal learning networks and bringing ideas and people together as well as fostering creativity, and encouraging people to originate and create their own future.

Richmond and Collingwood are two suburbs where many people at the crossroads of their lives settle temporarily. The region is a microcosm of the melange of cultures in the wider community. These two suburbs have absorbed migrants to Australia from Italy, Greece, Yugoslavia, Turkey, Vietnam, Cambodia, Timor and elsewhere. Over the years, English as a Second Language classes have been based at the library as well as a resource collection. The community arts co-ordinator, based at the library, facilitates the learning of many groups in the community through projects. Recently the products of a Turkish Women's Craft program were displayed at the local women's homes. Many people redirecting their lives have been helped by the Adult Literacy Program where tutoring is provided on a one-to-one basis.

In this rapidly gentrifying community there is still a high proportion of aged people, particularly women. The library provides a range of learning experiences for people in the form of regular weekly outings, films and craft activities. Librarians take books and hear-a-book cassettes to those people in the community who are housebound as well as bringing these people to the library to select their books and interact with others in the community.

The building is also a venue for the Tombolas, a group of local adults who script and act plays. Many of the themes have a local political and historical flavour. In addition, the bookmobile service takes learning resources to the community, health centres and factories in the area.

Many people in the community have difficulty accessing information. The library provides the base of an informal, community learning 'switchboard' connecting learners with resources of all kinds. Many people approach the staff for ideas as they are reluctant to use the printed material available. Exhibitions, displays and a community calendar have encouraged individuals to try new learning experiences and exposed them further to new resources.

Over the years, seminars and evening programs have been organised so that residents can search the history of their house, street and family using the council records. These rate books are now on microfiche and the local history librarian provides assistance and support to those who wish to search these encyclopedia documents at the library.

The staff at Carringbush are encouraged to move alongside learners and to support them in retrieving information and resources from the various catalogues. They also give assistance in helping learners plan their approach to their learning projects. The library service is organised to facilitate open learning and to switch people back onto learning that they may have been put off in the past. Systems of information retrieval and loans have been developed with the ease of the public in mind. The resource collection is selected keeping in mind the needs of the community including the intelligent, non-academically motivated.

Many of the staff have lived and/or worked in the local community for a considerable time and are familiar with the learning networks, needs and patterns. They are concerned with removing the inequities in people's abilities to learn and helping them adjust to change.

The local history activities are organised on the premise of blending a range of sensory experiences in discovery with the personal meaning of place. The learning experiences therefore utilise the wider environment. Topicality is also another important factor in the planning of displays, films, book collections, marking for example, The Year of Peace, the Tasmanian Wilderness, and the Cable Tram Centenary celebrations.

Cable Tram Centenary Celebration

The community arts officer and local history librarian, in particular, are continually looking for ways to improve community learning and to weave culture within the community and the fabric of the lives of people. Staff are encouraged to discuss their experiences and difficulties with users informally and at staff development sessions. These are times to share other experiences, attitudes and the understanding and use of various resources. The staff are conscious of the gap between what is desirable and what is the reality in terms of provision and seek ideas and feedback from the community on an informal basis.

For many people this service has been their first experience of a public library since the South Richmond Library closed its doors in 1949 and the moribund service at Collingwood limped along. News of the service spread when it opened in September 1977. The local and not so local grapevine has brought neighbours and those from surrounding suburbs together. The extensive network of contacts and goodwill that the staff have developed over the years has helped to maintain the interest and momentum in the use of the library.

The Carringbush Community News, as well as other forms of publicity, are printed on the library's off-set printing press. The local Council newsletters and newspapers regularly feature items about the library. Radio interviews have attracted the attention of those interested in the cultural fabric of these two inner suburbs and the support to learning that the library provides. The services reach out to those who have had alienating learning experiences and entice them to try another form. Ironically,

competing influences for people's leisure time, such as the television, radio, and daily newspapers bring people into the library in search of recommended books and resources.

OUTCOMES

As far as community learning is concerned, the programme goals have not been stated explicitly. However, they could be interpreted as follows:

i. to encourage identification in the community with the library as a centre for open learning;

ii. to create a sense of place and belonging;

iii. to generate a positive attitude and mood towards learning;

iv. to stimulate and enrich the daily lives of people;

v. to satisfy the inner needs of people which they may not have recognised within themselves;

vi. to be a vehicle for community development; and

vii. to reach out to those who have had alienating learning experiences and create an attitude in the community that learning does not stop when one leaves school.

Knowledge about the cause-and-effect relations between resources and everyday problems is limited. One could be concerned that the community does not make significant use of the library and its associated networks for information in helping them solve its problems. One could have reservations in thinking that all problem-solving is a simple matter of finding the appropriate resources to meet a need.

One of the most important functions of the library is to alleviate loneliness. On Saturday and Sunday afternoons, hundreds of people - often the destitute, the elderly - come to share with the staff their problems regarding their neighbourhood and developers. Some feel more capable of creating their own future after they have discussed matters with others in the community. Many of those researching their family history have gained enough self-confidence that they are publishing their family histories. The informed elite, who are active in the community and take more than a passing interest in local activities, have been inspired to start petitions or deputations after examining a display or taking part in a historical walk.

A number of the adult learners come from other suburbs to borrow resources and to take part in the activities offered, especially during Heritage Week every April. The library receives frequent referrals and requests from other libraries and individuals in the wider community. Over the years, visitors from interstate and overseas have visited Carringbush.

INPUTS

Carringbush Library serves people of two inner city suburbs, the people of which are a microcosm of the ethnic mixture of Melbourne and reflect successive waves of migrant peoples. The change in social and cultural composition is mirrored in the changing make-up of library users.

The felt quality of a place is never fully revealed by discussing the physical environment or the way people move within it. Perhaps the feature which contributes the most to the quality of the library learning experience is the staff. Their compassion, tolerance and adaptability, as well as their ability to personalise service and accept people as they are, enhances the interaction that takes place and people's attitude towards the library. Many people ostensibly come to borrow resources but, if one looks below the surface, many are a seeking a listening ear. The staff also volunteer considerable time out of hours to attend meetings and community festivals.

The staff may not recognise that they are learning facilitators but they are, in fact, building bridges between people and encouraging them to explore their personal and community resources, as well as contributing to the spirit of the place. Likewise, most resource people who facilitate learning experiences such as historical walks and seminars and historical re-enactments would not see themselves as adult educators.

Over the years, both the Collingwood and Richmond Council have generously supported the library and its services both in money and kind. The financial contribution per head of population is well above the average in the State of Victoria. It was through the efforts of the Town Clerk that a centre was established in the basement of the library. Considerable staff, council time and funds have been spent organising the council records, dating back to 1857, and establishing the appropriate housing.

Over the years the library has obtained grants from a variety of sources available to all public libraries. These include library innovation grants to produce a multi-volume audio kit for English as a Second Language called OZWORDS. The Community Arts Council of Australia, Victorian Arts Council and Ethnic Affairs have funded many projects and activities over the years. The Inner South Eastern Region Literacy Co-ordinator for TAFE (Technical and Further Education) is based at Carringbush. In recent years, the library has received funding for a variety of projects such as the Richmond Heritage Project and those made available under the Commonwealth Employment Scheme.

Built on the site of the old Globe Theatre, a traditional meeting place for the community, the ritual continues in the library. The historic, revamped Church of Christ now houses the Collingwood branch, the historical archives being located in its choir loft.

A ramp at the Richmond branch has made access easy for the elderly and physically handicapped. There are few recreational/meeting places in both suburbs and the meeting rooms and theatre are hired out to a wide range of local and wider community groups. Frequent users of the rooms include Community Aid Abroad, Neighbourhood house dance groups, and the Milparinka School for intellectually impaired adults. The darkroom facilities attract many budding photographers. Amongst the horse chaff boxes at the old council stables, adults can learn techniques in a variety of crafts and arts. The infant welfare centre in the basement of the building attracts young mothers to the library resources.

A wide variety of audio-visual equipment is available for public hire including video cameras, micro-computers, typewriters and film projectors. Many groups use the service of the Carringbush Press as well as the laminating, binding and copying service. The library bus is available for hire to community groups throughout the week. Apart from the wide range of books in community languages, the public can borrow maps, art prints, posters, videos, compact discs, cassettes and slides. The library has produced a range of publications especially of an historic nature, guided walks books, pamphlets, guides to the collections, photographs and postcards. The national Women's Art Register is also housed at the library and is used by artists throughout Australia.

The computerised systems at the library have freed the staff from more routine tasks to concentrate on working with the users. Good rapport has been established with other groups and organisations in the wider community. For example, an historic film about Collingwood entitled 'Boots and Beer' was made with the assistance of an educational unit. The community has responded positively to the extended opening hours. In fact, many adults come across the river to take advantage of the liberal borrowing regulations.

EVALUATION

The symbol of Carringbush represents the Tree of Knowledge/ Understanding amongst the houses and factories of Collingwood and Richmond.

Carringbush's establishment was facilitated by several active and community-conscious councils who saw that a library/community centre could help ordinary people to improve their lives. They continued to champion its cause in the early years. Paradoxically, because the service could be started from a virtually clean slate, the community had few preconceived notions of what a library's "limitations" ought to be.

The catalyst for the birth of the library was the founding director, Peter Stansfield, whose visionary thought on the possible learning experiences of people in a library environment cut across

many of the traditional aspects of library service. The present director is also supportive of the concept of the learning community and encourages the unification of creative and imaginative learning experiences. Some of the activities such as English classes, have been absorbed by other organisations, as it was seen more appropriate to rationalise services as well as channelling learners into classes commensurate with their ability, rather than a range of abilities in the single class at the library.

The library no longer organises formal classes in a range of subjects as it is felt that other organisations can do this more effectively. The staff continues to explore more effective ways of helping people learn independently.

INFLUENCES

By far the most serious threat to the library service comes from the Victorian government's announcement to cut $2 million from its contribution to libraries in 1987/88, as well as a similar cut the following year. The announced cut will seriously reduce the service that Carringbush can provide. Although the Minister for Arts appointed a committee to examine public library funding, he announced the cut before it met.

Carringbush is more than a library. It is a community centre providing a multiplicity of services, the new technology, and expanded opening hours and ease of use and access. The learning experiences and resources are relevant to all ages and socio-economic groups. It has played an important role in community learning, raising a profile on social issues and contributing to debate about concerns on a local level such as the proposed power lines down the Yarra Valley on the borders of Collingwood and Richmond. However, it is not possible to claim that the acquisition of knowledge will guarantee a change in behaviour patterns.

Perhaps the philosophy of service using public resources and learning experiences as a way to supporting, communicating and learning with people can help in some way to keep the community happy and more self-reliant and less liable to today's problems.

It is not altogether surprising that the community, loyal to its fellow residents, appreciates the value of the service and is rallying to the support of its learning resources. In the inner city life, Carringbush provides an anchor against the uncertainty of change.

CENTRE FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION: COMMUNITY EDUCATION PROGRAMME OF NON-VOCATIONAL, NON-AWARD COURSES

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INTRODUCTION

The Centre for Continuing Education at the Australian National University in Canberra provides a bi-annual programme of evening courses and field trips for the local community. There are no prerequisites and no course awards and the majority of courses are studied purely for interest. (The exception is a small number of courses useful for professional advancement such as computing, business writing, or preparatory studies for University entrance. These will not be considered in this paper.) Another provision for general interest education is the Audit Scheme, which allows anyone to sit in on normal undergraduate lectures (but generally not tutorials) without regard to his or her prior qualifications. Audit students do not sit for examinations and do not receive an award.

PROCESS

The average course is held in two-hour slots once a week for ten or twelve weeks, although other durations are possible (ranging from one day to 26 weeks). Most follow the lecture-plus-discussion format. There are also workshops (mainly in the "Human Beings" area), which may run for a weekend or for several weeks and which involve students in intensive participatory and/or small-group work. Day-long excursions to places of interest and field trips are arranged for appropriate subjects. Guest-speakers may be invited to contribute. Courses can be one-off affairs, or lead to follow-ons, depending on student demand and the interest and availability of tutors. Course materials include recommended readings, photocopied handouts, slides and films, and textbooks and tapes for language classes.

Tutors are found mainly by two methods; approaches to people considered suitable to teach a particular course or to recommend someone else; and advertisements in the University newspaper. Courses are proposed by tutors who provide a description and course outline, which includes details about the material to be covered, presentation methods used, and recommended readings. These proposals are first vetted by programme administrators. Each bi-annual programme is submitted to a meeting of a sub-committee of COPACE (Committee on Public Affairs and Continuing Education), which advises on all courses and conferences of the Centre for Continuing Education. Committee members are from the faculties and research schools of the University.

Tutors are assessed as to their suitability in terms of subject knowledge and teaching experience by means of a Curriculum Vitae and references. Courses are considered in regards to a balanced, unbiased coverage of the subject and suitability of the teaching methods employed.

Student input into planning usually takes place only at the delivery stage in new courses, during the first class when course programmes can be modified in the light of student interests. Most tutors are only too willing to do so , and some specifically state this fact in the course description. Some tutors will consult their class at the end of a course to help plan the next one. Administration staff are open to suggestions about future possibilities.

Needs assessments are conducted only informally, by experience of what is in demand and by experimentation. The programme administrators attempt to offer a balanced programme within and between the seven areas of study offered: Societal Processes, Literature and Philosophy, The Arts, Natural Environment, Human Beings, Languages, and Science, Mathematics and Computing.

Advertisements are placed in the local newspaper and reprints distributed to libraries, government departments and other major employers, as well as to cultural organisations and the like. The larger Summer Programme (about 70 courses) is advertised twice and has an enrolment period of two months; the smaller Spring Programme (about 30 courses) is advertised only once and people have three weeks to enrol.

There have been a number of courses for women sponsored by providers (both tutors and the administration) in order to keep fees low and encourage participation. Some courses run in the day-time to cater for people who cannot attend evening classes. Half-price concessions are available to pensioners and full-time students. Other than that, little effort is made to reach underprivileged groups in society. Students are counselled on request about which course to take and how to get the most from their study. There are no attempts made to retain students who wish to drop out.

OUTCOMES

The overall aim of the programme is to extend the University's offerings to the wider community. In line with this, the majority of tutors are academics and postgraduate students from the Australian National University. This is the brief given by the University to the Centre for Continuing Education.

Attending a course may kindle an interest in the subject area or in studying in general. Many students (especially women) enter tertiary study after first experiencing adult education as 'general interest' students.

INPUTS

Participants tend to be middle-class, public servants, clerical workers or professionals, well-educated, aged between 30 and 45, and 65 percent are female. In 1986, about 1500 students were enrolled in CCE general interest courses and another 50 in the Audit Scheme.

Most tutors are drawn from the ranks of ANU academic staff or postgraduate students. Others are self-employed (e.g. writers) and wish to work only part-time. The administration staff includes two full-time workers and some casual help recruited at peak times.

All courses are self-funding, i.e., tutors' salaries, materials and incidental expenses must be covered by the course fee. The University advances tutors' fees, but recovers the outlay at the end of the year. The two administrative staff positions, however, are CTEC funded and the University pays all costs of advertising. Casual staff are paid by the Centre for Continuing Education. Until recently, staff could be employed under the Commonwealth Employment Programme (whose salaries were paid by the Commonwealth government). This scheme supplied a third staff member to the administration team. However, changes in eligibility criteria now preclude universities from participating in the scheme.

Audit students impose no extra cost on the University. The Centre for Continuing Education keeps a percentage of the student's fee; the rest of the money goes to the department giving the course.

Most rooms used for classes are available free; these are only available in the evenings. All materials must be paid for (recoverable through students fee), including equipment hire from other parts of the University.

EVALUATION

Formal evaluations are conducted by means of questionnaires completed by students at the end of a course. Evaluations, however, are not sought from people who drop out. Informal evaluation consists of feedback from students and tutors about successes and failures. Any such information is taken into account when planning the next programme.

A yearly tutors' workshop is also available to tutors free of charge, covering subjects of interest to participants.

Until a few years ago, programmes offered a much wider range of subjects, including courses teaching skills. Since the establishment of the Committee on Public Affairs and Continuing Education (COPACE), guidelines have been laid down which state that courses must have an academic content. If

there is a practical component at all, it can only play a minor role. Programmes are to reflect the academic endeavours of the University. Competition with other ACT providers (e.g. TAFE Colleges) is to be avoided.

The last two years have seen an affirmative action programme in place, providing more courses for and about women.

INFLUENCES

The support of the University by way of funding two administrative posts and by providing lecture rooms free of charge makes the programme possible. Another main factor contributing to the success of the programme is the tutors' enthusiasm for giving these courses, enabling academics to teach a particular area of interest and young postgraduate students to gain experience in adult education. As tutors are paid only half of normal University lecturing rates, a love of teaching is a necessary incentive.

Programme administrators endeavour to keep fees down. However, rising costs have forced a steady increase in tuition fees over the last few years. These increases make it more difficult for many people to attend what is essentially a leisure time activity. Courses can only run when there are sufficient enrolments to defray expenses. In the past, more popular courses subsidised less well attended ones. Budget cuts to the Centre for Continuing Education have severely limited this practice, as there is a greater need to achieve a surplus income.

Until recently, a third staff member paid out of Commonwealth Employment Programme funds was an integral member of the administrative team. As this scheme is no longer available to universities, extra income needs to be generated to pay at least for casual help during peak workload times.

Classrooms from within the University are only available to the programme during the evenings, as they are heavily used for undergraduate teaching during the day. A small number of courses can run in the Centre for Continuing Education itself, but there is a general constraint on day-time classes due to the scarcity of available venues. Most University lecture rooms are in any case rather unsuitable for adult education purposes, with fixed furniture arranged in rows rather than in a pattern that facilitates discussions.

OTHER

Canberra is in many ways an atypical city, having a far larger than normal middle-class, white-collar population and especially a large number of public servants. This already very well-educated type

of clientele make up the main consumers of liberal adult education provision everywhere in Australia. Having a larger than average proportion of such people in Canberra enables the Centre for Continuing Education to offer a more comprehensive liberal arts type programme than could be expected from a city of the size of Canberra. Also, the lay-out of the city makes travel very easy, enabling more people to attend classes without a lengthy commute.

DISCUSSION PROGRAMMES AT THE VICTORIAN COUNCIL OF ADULT EDUCATION

Joanne Lee Dow

INTRODUCTION

The Victorian Council of Adult Education, through its Discussion Programmes Department, provides a distance education programme for some 700 groups across the state. These autonomous book discussion groups organise their own learning around the books and materials that are sent to them each month. The system is substantially self-perpetuating and provides another way for adults to participate in education.

PROCESS

Because this programme is based on self-directed adult groups, the educational, 'teaching', input is indirect, except for occasional seminars and visits to groups. Educational work in the programme concentrates, firstly, on providing a range of quality educational resources which can be used flexibly as a stimulus to discussion. In 1987, the programme had 1200 titles ranging from literature, biography, current social issues, and international affairs, to travel, art, religion, music, and film. Australian material is well represented. Education staff keep the diversity of participants' formal educational background very much in mind when choosing new titles. Titles are listed, with short abstracts, in the Department's published catalogue, Dialogue. The aim is not to find the lowest common denominator, but to provide pluralistic, quality reading. Each title is accompanied by educational notes (2,500-5000 words), discussion questions and suggestions for further reading. Notewriters provide the relevant information to make works more accessible, are open about their own view-points, and raise central human and intellectual issues in a style which unites depth with simplicity.

Secondly, the programme concentrates on supporting discussion as a technique for learning by means of publications like The Book Group Book, given to new groups and written by Departmental staff in 1977-8 to facilitate better group dynamics and to address issues specific to good discussion of books, and Group Affairs, a journal published for the groups by the CAE, in large part to put them in touch with each other's experience, criticisms and suggestions by sharing their written responses. Discussion is also supported by contact with groups. Each week, several groups spontaneously ring in to talk with educational staff about particular writers, works or issues, for library information, or with more general questions about their groups. While most contact is by telephone, educational staff sometimes visit groups. Lastly, occasional metropolitan and country seminars are conducted.

Because the participating groups are self-directed, the programme's staff have had to come to grips with the truism that their learning matters more than our teaching. The programme exemplifies key ideals, processes and structures at the heart of the CAE's work in adult education. These include, firstly, an awareness of the voluntary nature of adult learning. The overwhelming majority of our groups appear to be self-formed, locally-based groups whose members hear of the programme through friends and neighbours and who then join an existing group or form one of their own. Groups choose their own size (within the 6-15 limit), their own members, monthly meeting times and places. A small minority of groups meet in institutional settings - Community Centres, Neighbourhood Houses, Libraries, Homes for the Aged, Psychiatric Clinics - where more initiative may be taken by local staff.

Secondly, the program places emphasis on the self-directing characteristics of adult learning. The groups are self-directing and non-tutored. Groups direct their own meeting procedures. Most choose a different member to lead each discussion; a few have one fixed leader; some are leaderless . Each group develops its own style and engages with the discussion material in the manner and to the degree its members choose. Within the constraint of availability of box sets, groups choose their own discussion titles. The resource catalogue, Dialogue, stresses the importance of both the personal and group aspects of this selection process: "The groups will probably be most satisfied if each member receives an item of her or his personal choice at some time during the year."

Thirdly, the program gives recognition of the social dimensions to adult learning in groups. Dialogue explicitly recognises that "the social value of the scheme in providing the opportunity for individuals in a local community to meet and discuss areas of mutual interest is as valid and as valuable as its educational quality".

Maintenance of a decentralised programme. As outlined above, groups are self-selecting. In the last several years there has been minimal marketing (e.g., small advertisements in the CAE's programme guide distributed in the Melbourne metropolitan area). Yet, despite an annual disbanding rate of about nine percent, both country and metropolitan group numbers have slowly risen from about 564 in 1971 to 723 in 1986, which is close to the capacity limit of the Department's manual despatch system. The success of a decentralised programme, in which new groups are self-generating and existing groups regenerate, arises from a sound original conception followed by four decades of responsive planning.

Reaction Sheets. After each meeting, groups are encouraged to fill in a sheet, provided in each box, inviting them to comment on: "whether or not your group enjoyed the box and whether or not it has had any influence on your thinking, feelings, attitudes? How effective was the box in stimulating discussion? Did your group experience any difficulties in discussing the box? Do you have any suggestions as to how we might improve the box?" These are returned in the boxes and read daily by educational staff, enabling us to keep in touch with reception of new titles and notes and satisfaction with or complaints about all aspects of the programme. This constant feedback, together with telephone contact, is an important

feature of a programme where educational staff are given great freedom to back their own experience and judgement about acquisitions, withdrawal of titles and selection of notewriters.

Physical planning. Thorough and dependable systems, which link decentralised groups' choices with management and delivery of resources, are essential to this programme and are continuously refined. Considerable administrative responsibility is carried by each group secretary, a person who is nominated by the group and entitled to free membership in return for his/her administrative responsibilities. For the rest, our distance education venture requires painstaking housekeeping at the centre. We are a Department of forward timelines, forms, cards, systems, routines and daily chores - each working day some 35-40 boxes are despatched and returned by physical handling and manual recording systems.

During its four decades, the programme has changed with social changes - sometimes proactively, sometimes reactively. Key issues at present are attitudes (including linguistic ones) to women, racial equality, the aged, the disabled, and social justice.

In 1985, a major review of the Discussion Programs Department was initiated by Mr. Tony Delves, the Director of the CAE, in response to a period of stress and high staff turnover. Areta McCulloch's report and recommendations provided important guidelines in the department's goal-setting by existing and new staff. Key improvements worked for in the period 1986-1988 have been:

i. clarification of job briefs and internal systems and processes;

ii. additional educational staff;

iii. rationalisation of the enrolments system;

iv. computerisation of despatch, providing opportunity for programme expansion and releasing clerical staff to more varied and satisfying tasks;

v. better materials selection and discards based on more systematic use of group selections and preferences and reaction sheets and greater participation in these decisions by group members, notewriters and others;

vi. upgrading of educational notes;

vii. use of a Materials Improvement Fund to upgrade resources, particularly art boxes;

viii. better stock control and materials management of more than 100,000 individual items;

ix. widening of the programme to the print-handicapped and the housebound in a co-operative effort with Braille and the Talking Book Library and the Association for the Blind; and,

x. the development of fleximode materials for use by disadvantaged women, individually or in groups, by building on existing resources, acquiring new ones, and using CAE's tutoring and administrative staff's experience with such women.

On the whole, existing groups recruit their own members and provide the incentive for new groups to form. Educational staff visit groups when they indicate that they want assistance in improving their processes or in deciding whether it is appropriate to continue. The programme is operating very close to its maximum capacity and cannot be expanded until the despatch system is computerised and storage facilities improved.

OUTCOMES

For us, these are an inseparable part of learning and teaching processes and planning and structures. The following statement thus summarises goals implicit in the foregoing:

> Discussion Programmes aim to provide a range of quality educational resources which can be used flexibly to support discussion as a technique of voluntary, social and educational adult learning in self-directed groups which maximise learners' choices in a decentralised programme where individual reading is followed by group discussion.

At the most basic level, evidence of participants' satisfaction is provided by their staying in this non-tutored, decentralised, user-pays programme. The goals outlined in the above are humane, traditional 'humanities' ones which are difficult to quantify. Evaluative studies employing qualitative methodologies are needed to determine the extent to which these are being achieved. Our impression is that groups engage very differently with the pre-discussion reading - with some groups or individuals not finishing, while others do an impressive amount of extra reading. While we defend each group's right to engage with resource material to the extent it chooses, it still seems that group satisfaction is highest when the intellectual and imaginative stimulus of completed reading co-exists with social goals. Written feedback suggests that this is frequently the case.

The groups' Reaction Sheets, confirmed by impressions in contacts with groups, also make clear that for some participants, the group becomes a major support network in their lives. Some groups have operated for over thirty years, though their membership may have changed somewhat during that time. Many participants are keen to join a different local group when they move house. Others travel up to 200 kms. to be part of their monthly group meeting. Research would be useful on the social dimensions of this programme (including the gender differences among reading and discussion groups in Australia) and on its role as an access, bridge, or stimulant to other informal and formal adult learning, particularly for women.

INPUTS

In 1980, the Department's education officer, Yoni Ryan, surveyed 625 members in 62 groups and received replies from 270 members in 61 groups. The findings of her study confirm the impressions of staff, then and now, about our participants.

The programme materials assume English-language reading skills of at least middle-secondary-school level. The 1980 survey confirmed the educational diversity of participants, with 25 percent having completed lower secondary school, a further 20 percent having Year 12 (Matriculation/HSC), 13 percent having further technical trade or secretarial training, and 24 percent with college and 17 percent with university education.

This is overwhelmingly a programme in which women choose to participate. The 1980 figures showed 95 percent (258) of respondents to be female, 59 percent of respondents were in full-time housework, and 40 percent were in the 30-40 age group. At that time, only eight percent were in the 50-60 age group. It would appear that in 1987 the proportion of older participants has risen by at least ten percent and that there has been a slight and welcome increase in the number and proportion of male participants. The programme remains a significant social and educational opportunity for women, particularly accessible to women in the home, whether they be women with children, or older women.

Since April 1986, Discussion Programmmes has had seven full-time staff - an Education Officer, Education Assistant, Administrative Assistant, three Clerical Officers, and a Storeman. Notewriters are contracted at $225 per title (1987 fee).

The programme falls into the 'user-pays' section of the CAE's offerings. Victorian annual fees in 1987 were $24 per member plus a Materials Improvement Levy of $2 per member, with secretaries exempted from payment. The fee covers the two-way box cartage. Cartage costs amount to one-third of income from fees. A group concession fee of $165 p.a. is available to institutional groups. Special concessions are negotiated for individuals or groups who cannot afford these fees. The income from groups covers all programme costs, including notewriters' fees, but 80 percent of other staffing costs are subsidised by the CAE which also pays overheads. Current programme changes provide the basis for an increased number of groups, and greater financial self-sufficiency of the Department.

The programme offers 1200 titles, for many of which there are duplicate sets. Each of the 3,000 sets is boxed in older wooden or new plastic numbered boxes for monthly deliveries to the groups. A box normally consists of 15 copies of the title book, plastic-covered, stitched and numbered; 15 copies of the commissioned notes, typed and edited by Departmental staff, and published in A5 booklet format by the CAE's printroom; and some additional material related to the main title (books, journals, photocopies, slides, audio tapes, etc.). Boxes are stored in compactus-shelving in the CAE's basement area. Titles and box numbers are catalogued on cards in a Kalamazoo, on a manual system which tracks each box's contents and location. This system and group selection cards have undergone computerization since 1982. Dialogue, the resource catalogue, contains descriptions of 40-80 words for each of the 1200 titles. Each year, groups choose 36 titles and record these on selection cards. While every effort is made to give groups their preferred choices, they may receive any 11 of their 36 choices each year. In its four decades, the programme has used rail delivery to stations or door-to-door road transport: in 1987 both cartage systems were in use.

EVOLUTION

> "The Adult Education Act of 1946 was remarkable in a number of ways. It meant that for the first time in Australian educational history, adult education was recognised as requiring a separate identifiable institutional form. Up to this point adult education was always an appendage, a supplement, to the work of other bodies, mainly universities or Departments of Education, which had many other and more pressing concerns. Now it was to stand alone, attending to its own special business, developing its own techniques and methods."
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> Colin R. Badger. Who was Badger? (Melbourne, Council of Adult Education 1984), p.98.

When the Council of Adult Education began its work under Colin Badger, its first Director, in April 1947, the Discussion Services Department's resources were transferred from the Extension Board at the University of Melbourne. The oldest current book group is thus older than the CAE itself. During the subsequent four decades, the programme has changed with Victorian society and with the CAE's changing awareness of how best to meet its statewide role. The Council's first emphasis was on community arts through extensive, touring, 'cultural' work in drama, music, ballet and opera. The programme's resources concentrated on music and art boxes, and on drama, in conjunction with the Victorian Drama League. Robb Mason, Head of the Department in the 1970s, saw this first movement as coming to a close in 1956, 'the year of the FJ Holden and TV'. Social changes particularly in the form of personal mobility and recreation patterns were matched by structural changes. The greater independence of country towns and regions was signalled by the establishment of the first of the Country and Continuing Education Centres in Wangaratta in 1962. The programme's centre began to shift from its music and art boxes (worn by use) to books. The first stitched paperbacks were introduced in the early 1970s and during those years, the present administrative systems were invented. Attempts were made to overcome the discontinuity of monthly meetings on different topics by the introduction of extended programmes which offered the possibility of more depth and sequence in selections to those groups who felt that need. 'Talking Points' (pithy discussion starters on issues of interest) were developed in an attempt to overcome the programme's limitation to prepared readers, and to open it to community groups working on-the-spot. Later still, the programme attempted to break out of its monolingual English mode by providing 'Talking Points' in Italian. None of these attempts has really shifted the programme's centre of gravity.

INFLUENCES

The positive and negative aspects of Discussion Programmes may be seen as two sides of the same coin. For example, it is only by risking the reinforcement of parochial prejudice that the programme can offer the possibility of self-directing local groups who develop and widen sympathy and understanding through autonomous reading and discussion. The risk is minimised when strong local initiative is strengthened by networking between groups, and stimulated and supported by input from the centre. Thus a positive influence has been the development of structures which not only enable two-way dialogue between groups and staff at the City Centre but, even more importantly, allow groups to interact with each

other - such structures include group visits, Group Affairs, and regional seminars. However, such structures are time-intensive. When the ratio of educational staff to the number of groups is low, as at present, they are difficult to maintain. Their failure threatens the quality of the programme, but not necessarily its continuation.

The physical delivery of resources is facilitated by Victoria's radial railway and transport system, reaching out from the capital city, Melbourne, through a large suburbia into the smallest yet second most populous of Australia's states. However, cartage costs are high within Victoria and all but prohibitive for the immense, interstate distances of such locations as Alice Springs and Darwin.

Four decades of history have given depth and variety to the Department's resources. On the other hand, many existing resources urgently need to be withdrawn, replaced or updated - another costly and time-intensive process. Administrative systems have been well-designed and constantly improved. But, the programme requires much repetitive and meticulous work which limits job satisfaction and has led to periods of high staff turnover. Automated systems now being developed should enable more staff time to be directed to improving the quality of the programme. The programme has been fortunate in attracting committed staff and of having the support of the Council's directors (Colin Badger, Colin Cave and Tony Delves) over its lifetime. Each has appreciated the programme's quality and its statewide relevance. Nevertheless, distance education programmes such as this one are always potentially vulnerable because their participants are 'invisible' at the structural centres.

OTHER

This programme faces the same funding constraints which marginalise adult education within Australia's educational budget, itself under pressure. As the present spending on Departmental automation and upgrading of educational quality indicates, the CAE continues to support the programme although the fees generated do not meet its gross costs.

Such support is particularly heartening for a venture which has overwhelmingly become a women's programme, although it is not and was not designed or marketed as such. Four decades ago, the educational oppression of women was rarely recognized or admitted. It is now increasingly being addressed although it is far from being redressed. The community-based, self-reliant, flexible, networking structures of this programme, which offer the many choices emphasised earlier in this paper, demonstrate one way in which women's participation in learning can be effective. The programme offers a distance education model whose values and structures should be borne in mind as funding becomes available for open learning, using the new communications technology.

THE ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT TRAINING PROGRAMME

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INTRODUCTION

This case study describes a programme of Community Management Training for members of remote village communities in Northern Australia. The programme consisted of a continuous process of short, intensive workshops and community follow-up visits in a phased approach. This approach can be compared and contrasted with the longer-term courses provided by other institutes where participants are required to leave their communities for substantial periods of time.

PROCESS

This adult education training programme consisted of five inter-related activities each of which was essential to the teaching process.

i. Consultation, community visits and needs assessment mini-workshops, where appropriate, were conducted. These incorporated discussions on content and participant selection as well as follow-up assessments.

ii. On-campus workshops were held at Institute headquarters in Sydney and were designed to cater to broad management development needs. These workshops were also accompanied by field study visits to local governments and other programmes of interest designed to facilitate accelerated social development.

iii. A number of off-campus workshops were organized. The sites of these varied according to the aims of the workshops and the nature of the participants. The workshops, held off-campus, were normally related to specific aspects of individual community training programmes. Often, these workshops related to a range of more specific needs that could be more appropriately met in a practical laboratory situation.

iv. A significant feature of the programme was inter-community study tours. Initiated to allow respective community personnel to share information and to observe and analyse community activities (e.g., housing and enterprise developments), these structured visits were the first of their type to be introduced into an interpreted management education programme for Aboriginal people.

v. Follow-up visits were designed to assist participants as well as to provide briefing for support personnel on-site. They were developed to allow systematic feedback and can still be further developed depending on the availability of suitably trained personnel.

Programme planning was managed by means of a series of staff consultations with participants of previous workshops, members of Village Community Councils, village administration staff, and

professional personnel such as teachers and health workers. These consultative field visits varied in time frame. Some visits were made immediately following a training workshop. Others were organized from four to six weeks after the participants had returned to their village communities. The information gained from these consultations provided in part the basis of the framework of subsequent workshop programmes. In addition, participant assessments were carried out after each workshop. This approach enabled the planners of the series to learn as the Institute completed each workshop, i.e., to learn from the participants' reaction and comments about what the next workshop should do.

The details of programme content, structure, and actual methodology were evolved on a daily (and sometimes sessional) basis according to the participants' levels of interest, comfortability with, and receptiveness to the subject matter. Difficult subject matter such as financial management required coverage in a series of different modules. Consequently, there was need for a great deal of flexibility in the planning to allow for extended teaching of certain subjects. On the other hand, other subject matter was absorbed more quickly than anticipated. So there was a need for a flexible programme which could follow issues as required.

The nature of the programme was such that it had to be assessed constantly - in order to monitor participant interest, comprehension and apprehension. The challenge of the particular programme was the need to maintain a consistently high level of participant interest and motivation. This could only be achieved by regular monitoring and, if necessary, changes in pace and format of programme.

Changes could be made to the composition of the small working groups. In some instances participant response to subject matter determined the nature and content of succeeding sessions which at times would take the programme into unexpected directions. However, if it maintained interest and the learning process was consistent with the broad goals set for the workshop, then the programme was adjusted accordingly. Changes could also be made to the format - discussion groups, role playing or debating groups, for instance.

The development of staff was an integral part of the programme. All members of staff were encouraged and expected to learn from each other. At the same time, staff were expected to learn from participants. This was understood and respected by the participants who frequently took the time to teach their language, customs, dance and songs to the staff. This programme was based on the principle that all training would be participatory. This required that the curriculum would have to be structured to enable all members to participate in all facets of the programme.

Given that English was a foreign language for all participants and that a significant number of participants in each session were not literate, such a participative programme required a high degree of creativity, in both content and methodology. This was achieved by organising all training sessions in small groups. These groups were constituted in different ways, e.g., intra-community/single language

groups, male/female groups, and inter-community groups. Also, all training sessions relied on a visualised teaching process - in keeping with traditional Aboriginal teaching methodology. This helped to maintain attention and concentration and facilitated comprehension and programme content including complex subject matter.

The rate of progress throughout the programme was determined by the participants' demonstrated pace of learning. Their continued motivation required a programme that was consistently interesting and achievable. The demand of meeting such programme requirements makes non-formal adult education so challenging and yet so rewarding.

OUTCOMES

Within many remote villages, the members had begun to move towards acceptance of the promises implied in the Government policy of Aboriginal self-management. The establishment of village councils and Local Government administrative structures reflected the desire to pursue and exercise self-management. However, government reports of the day indicated that many community groups were experiencing varying degrees of difficulties in the management of their own affairs, generally because of the lack of skilled and knowledgeable managerial officers. The Community Management Training programme was designed to fulfil a vital need for executive officers of Aboriginal Community Councils to be both informed and knowledgeable about administration and possess the relevant skills required in management practices. This project was predicated on the belief that the Aboriginal residents in these remote villages needed a training programme that both recognised and incorporated the cultural background of its adult learners as a springboard for a new type of learning process.

A preliminary planning workshop was held with representatives of the participating communities to confirm the need for the training programme and to identify in broad terms the focus and content of the programme. Management is a culture-bound activity and educational methodologies have to be especially suited to the goals, values and attitudes of the people who are the "Managers". The goal of this project was to develop a training programme that was culturally compatible with and academically appropriate to provide the levels of knowledge and skills required for self-management.

Whilst the Institute conducted regular assessments of programme effectiveness with the participants, arrangements were made to obtain independent, external assessments of the programme from the participants, village field staff, and government officers in the region. Samples of all three levels of assessments are presented as follows.

(a) **Participants' Assessments**

"In small groups where we shared ideas and experience from our own cultures and communities. 'A sharing time'. The lecturers shared with us and took our ideas and we worked the programme out together. We felt we participated in setting up the course. We made up teaching books. The lecturers were sensitive to Aboriginal people and asked advice about cultural things."

"The talks were about our culture and how we can teach our children their culture and also the European way."

"Language was simple and easy to understand."

"I have done courses with balanda (white people). They write up balanda ideas on the board, they use hard words and talk too long and make us sleepy. They don't stop to let us work things out if we can't get it. The Institute people share lectures and let us break up into smaller groups if something bothers us. Then we share our ideas." .

"It was real helpful to me [an older man], but especially to the council. No one knew about budgetting before, or how to speak. We also heard how other people dealt with problem people in their communities. We used to be tough and send them away for six months. They felt like outcasts. Now we make them do public work for the community for nothing."

"I [a Council Chairperson] did a lot of things to help this community after those courses. I started a mothers' club get-together and I am on a parents and friends' association and do a lot for the school."

"I [Assistant Teacher] learnt paper work and to use the phone and the duplicator. Before I had to get help with the duplicator, now I use it on my own".

(b) **Village Field Staff**

Both specific and general statements of an educative nature have been provided by village staff. For instance, both the headmaster, and the class teacher, have seen improvements in D and said D's attendance was better. He uses the duplicator on his own and is confident on the phone. He has been much more helpful and reliable. Or, JR, a community worker who has 16 years' experience in the area, stated that the courses were very good, and there were not many such programmes available.

Generally, the students all seemed to have good feelings towards the staff of the Aboriginal Training and Cultural Institute, and some asked personally after individuals. Some commented on the fact that the attitudes and approach were different from those they had experienced from European teachers. They felt there was more sensitivity to cultural matters, sensitivity to Aboriginal people and how they understand things and how they react. They felt there was a real listening by staff and a sense of working things out together, as well as a flexibility that helped them to stop and take stock, or to thrash out something which they didn't understand before moving on. They felt, too, that the course dealt with issues which were of real concern to them. These appear to us to be very positive aspects of the Institute's programme that makes it somewhat different and very valuable to Aboriginal people who are trying to cope with a foreign world and with running complex community structures and functions which have been rather 'dumped' upon them.

(c) **Government Officers**

Perhaps the most representative assessment has been provided by a Senior Policy Analyst of the Aboriginal Employment and Training Unit who noted:

> I have now investigated quite closely the training that the Institute has been providing in a number of communities and alternatives to it. We have sought information from Aboriginal people in the communities; from Council members as well as office staff, from non-Aboriginal people who have worked in these communities and are familiar with the training offered and its effect, and from a variety of departments and other agencies that provide some management training in the N.T. and elsewhere.
>
> At present there seems to be no satisfactory alternative in the N.T. (and probably elsewhere in Australia) to the training that the Institute offers. The TAFE section of the N.T. Department of Education offers some training, mostly in book-keeping in conjunction with the Department of Community Development (Community Government Section); however, their teaching materials from my observations, focus largely on the technical aspects of management.
>
> One of the strongest features of the Institute's work was its initial emphasis (in each stage of the officers' training) on development of conceptual understanding before, and then in conjunction with, the presentation of the technical aspects of management. This seems an obvious approach to take when working with a community where management of the kind necessary to operate Council offices and community works is a new concept; and yet, it is not a significant part of the other training programmes I have observed.
>
> The Institute advocates, and assists to set up, a process of continuing support to the officers when they resume their work in their community, and is developing useful materials to assist with this. However, all the feedback that we have received on the Institute's work is highly favourable. In addition, it seems that one of the most important effects is on motivation and level of confidence, an essential pre-requisite to further development. There is at present no satisfactory alternative to the training that the Institute offers.

An assessment of the effectiveness of the training was made by obtaining comments from a number of representatives of user organisations. The response in all cases was that the Institute had made a positive and valuable contribution and the approach adopted by the Institute had been suitable for the needs of Aboriginals. A former principal of a Catholic Teachers' College, Mr. Hagen, also commented that the Institute programmes he examined were "as good as anything he had seen in New Guinea."

The Committee concluded that:

> the Community Management Training (CMT) programme is an effective response to the critical need for the development of management awareness and the introduction of simple management skills in Aboriginal communities. The Institute has provided an apparently effective and appropriate management training course utilising innovation techniques.

INPUTS

This programme was structured to be group-orientated in nature and in process. This means that all the participants were linked by common attributes. For instance, the participants were members of traditionally oriented and remote village communities and the participants were associated with the administration of their villages - either by employment or as members of the local village, i.e. council. The participants ranged in age from 17 - 62 years, with males predominating in the various groups. The educational levels of participants ranged from no formal schooling to level three of high school.

As a basic tenet of self-management, the selection of all participants was left to the Village Councils. The criteria differed within each council. Participant costs of travel, accommodation and educational materials were covered by Government bursaries or grants. Participant numbers for all the workshops were kept to a maximum of 25.

The ten staff of the Institute involved in the programme presented a wide range of backgrounds and skills. Most had had some professional experience overseas and were especially recruited because of this experience. Effective non-formal education in this type of cross-cultural programme requires intensive application of staff at least in the initial stages of the programme. To this end, the staff were structured into a task force. Whilst all staff were assigned functional positions within the Institute, all were involved in the planning and were rostered to work across the board in their areas of speciality to assist in the overall development of the programme. The Administrative Officer (accounting) was responsible for the development and teaching of all budgeting segments of the programme. The secretary served as recorder for non-literate participants when required. The Youth Work staff developed all the role-play segments of the programme and were in turn assisted by the Administrative Officer for any financial management training required in that programme. This task force approach gave all staff a personal involvement in and a commitment to the programme. More importantly, it helped to personalise the Institute's service to the participants who became familiar with and friendly to all staff. In cultural terms, it defined for the Institute staff members their "relationship" to the participants and provided an appropriate cultural framework for the teaching programme.

The programme was funded in three ways:

i. direct government funding for Institute administration and programme costs;

ii. separate government funding for participant travel and accommodation costs; and

iii. funding in kind, by the contributions of ATCI non-programme staff, in the form of the communities in maintaining the wages of working participants during training and by the communities providing 'premises' and resources for off-campus, on-site programmes.

The programme was offered centrally in the Institute's Campus headquarters located in Sydney. This is a three-storey sandstone building (100 years old) consisting of a residence, auditorium (for small

group classes), offices and a library. The building is occupied on a lease basis with the Institute required to undertake maintenance and renovation in lieu of rent. The construction of the building is such that it is cool in summer and cold in winter - which prescribes to some extent the nature of the programme offered. Sydney-based programmes were offered in the summer months and village-based programmes were offered on site in the winter months.

Programmes offered in the villages, whilst they are desirable, are not without problems such as lack of suitable premises for teaching, irregular attendance of host participants, lack of accommodation, illness in the community and cultural prescriptions which may limit the available food supplies, or create inter-community rivalries. However, the team-work established between the staff and the participants managed to over-ride most of the presenting problems.

At the time of its establishment, the Institute did not have any money for equipment. In fact it was six years before it received an equipment grant. Consequently the initial operations were set up with minimal cost equipment. Without the benefits of black/white boards it was decided to rely on the use of newsprint or butcher's paper for all teaching and participant class work. The development of education techniques dependent on supplies of butcher's paper (flip chart paper) was due to a lack of more expensive materials. But imagination so developed its use that it became a central feature of workshops for illustration, for group summaries, for part of the record for later reference, and for setting out the agreed plan of work at the beginning of the workshops. The participants could see the result of their work, especially the semi-literate or the pre-literate.

The participants proved to be more comfortable with the larger sheet format than with regular writing materials. It was more conducive to the participant group process as it enabled all members of the group to observe the work in progress and to be able to contribute as required. The butcher's paper methodology also meant that the Institute had complete mobility and flexibility in taking its programmes off-campus. It was never reliant on a formally-equipped class room for its programmes. In the course of the programme, the butcher's paper was attached to the outside wall of a building, a tree trunk and/or an upended table, with the desired result of creating a comfortable learning environment. The technology was also kept to a minimum - any equipment that was used was manual - by reason of cost and by reason of portability. A manually operated spirit duplicator was used both on-campus and off- campus - as programmes were conducted in areas without regular power supplies. All teaching materials used were developed by the participants themselves. This had the benefit of relevance - it was presented at a suitable level of comprehension. It also had the benefit of reinforcement; it was their own work, they could identify with it and they could recall its definition and development.

EVALUATION

A change of national government in 1972 brought new policies and new directions to the administration of Aboriginal Affairs. The previous policy of Integration was replaced in 1973 with a policy of Aboriginal Self Determination. The major effects of this policy were the establishment of remote village councils and community organisations and the introduction of direct funding to these councils and organisations. Past education policies and practices which limited Aborigines to four years of elementary schooling meant that there was a lack of suitable personnel in the community with the necessary education, experience or expertise to "manage" these village councils. Therefore, Aboriginal people were being placed in executive and management positions with no appropriate training nor with the opportunities to gain such training. Management training opportunities were limited for Aboriginal people who could not leave their communities for long periods of time. There was no opportunity for management training for those Aborigines who had not attained elementary levels of literacy or numeracy. Management courses available through the mainstream system, were not structured for nor were they appropriate to meet the specific cultural or group needs of Aborigines involved in the day-to-day administration of their communities.

The general objective of this management training programme was to train Aboriginal staff from community councils in the effective utilisation of good management practices. This required new initiatives in training Aborigines to assist them to acquire the necessary skills for the responsible and competent management of their councils. In this regard, Aborigines needed to be able to improve their decision-making skills, have the opportunity to accept responsibility for their decisions and maximise the potential of their own human and cultural resources. Educational and training programmes necessary to develop these skills had to be highly specialised and suited to the changing and particular needs of the participants. The management training programme had to provide task-oriented programmes which would assist Aboriginal groups and implement their own programmes at their own pace, utilising as much as possible their own personnel resources.

Contrary to the generally-held opinion within the formal systems, the Institute believed that Aboriginal people did not need to have a high degree of literacy in order to perform significant management functions.

The Institute set up this programme especially to meet the training needs of groups of Aborigines in responsible positions in community councils who: could not go away for longer periods of time because of the pressures of their positions in the community, family responsibilities or simply lack of familiarity and confidence outside the community; or had not attained literacy in English to be able to cope with other programmes, but who required organisational methods to be more effective in their work in their communities.

The Institute was hindered in its efforts by the apparent reluctance or unwillingness of the bureaucracy to accept that Aborigines in the remote villages could cope with and respond to conceptual management education. Attitudes expressed at the time of negotiations included statements that the government would support a pilot programme of six-weeks training but would not accept the need for a structured three-year programme of management education for people who were mostly non-literate. The negotiations for government support for the programme took two full years of regular and repetitive, inter-departmental meetings before final agreement was given for a one-year trial programme. Against this, however, was the attitude of the community participants who responded immediately to the first planning workshop and maintained their responsiveness to all subsequent training.

INFLUENCES

Positive influences that contributed to the programme's effectiveness included the combination of programme methodology and participant response to that methodology which created an intangible chemistry that was difficult to define yet so easily observed in the obvious pleasure that the participants gained from their learning. This chemistry derived from a combination of elements: a fluid format; a high degree of participant skills in conceptualisation; a willingness for and comfortability in working with a visualised teaching process; a willingness to accept multi-format teaching modes; an "established" and accepting work relationship with the programme staff; and an acceptance of the Institute motto - **Each One Teach One** - which facilitated peer-group training and an acceptance of reciprocal obligations on the part of the village council, the participants and the Institute staff - each to share with, support and respect each other.

It may be said that this programme succeeded in spite of all the difficulties. Some difficulties such as those associated with isolated location in the tropics were unavoidable. Travel in and out of communities in the monsoon season was difficult when the airstrips were closed due to heavy rains. Such communities were serviced only by radio telephone which required queuing for scheduled phone calls. The lack of commitment to the programme by the bureaucracy meant that the programme was seriously under-resourced. Frequent changes in community service staff meant fluctuating support of on-site resource personnel. The heavy demands of self- governance meant that the village councils were in a constant state of siege - day-to-day crisis management. All other issues had to compete with the crisis of the day.

As a government-funded centre at the time of the programme, the Institute stood in a similar situation to all village councils which were also government funded. Consequently, the Institute had a special understanding of the operational problems faced by the village councils. As an Aboriginal managed and directed College, the Institute provided a practical laboratory for the village councillors to

observe self-management in action. So practical questions such as 'How do I dismiss unsatisfactory white staff?' could be raised and answered without embarrassment.

The Institute's commitment to professional excellence helped to reinforce traditional Aboriginal values of educational performance, thereby creating a reputation for cultural sensitivity and cultural relevance. This Community Management Training programme was based on the belief that all participants bring to the group a body of existing knowledge and experience which is relevant and valued. This practice created a framework for mutual acceptance and facilitated training for each part of the programme. The educational materials produced, such as the workshop booklets, helped to reinforce the learning process. These booklets also provided a means of disseminating knowledge to a wider audience, those members of the village who were unable to attend the workshops.

WOMEN'S ACCESS PROGRAMME

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INTRODUCTION

The Women's Access Programme at the Continuing Education Centre (C.E.C.) Albury/Wodonga covers a range of activities and functions which seek to remove the barriers to women's education and to enhance their educational opportunities. Central to the programme is a series of short courses conducted by the C.E.C. and much of this case study will focus on this aspect of the programme. However, the programme also places strong emphasis on an outreach role, by assisting and supporting other groups in the development of their programmes. It also takes an active part, wherever possible, in other educational bodies and processes within the community so as to effect changes on behalf of women.

The programme has its own advisory committee, which is a sub-committee of the C.E.C.'s Committee of Management. The advisory committee oversees, supports and develops policy for the programme.

PROCESS

Teaching and learning principally take place within small groups, each with its own tutor. Each group is advertised as a separate class, e.g., 'Maths for Women', 'English', 'Stepping Stones', etc., but most are held on the one day and at the one location. The methodology used is a developing one, but one which is increasingly informed by a philosophy of social change, such as that espoused by Friere[1], and by feminist writers such as Jane Thompson[2]. Aspects of methodology incorporate a number of criteria.

i. All groups are women-only groups.

ii. Teaching methods seek to empower women to take active control of both their learning and their lives. Emphasis is thus placed on small group techniques, co-operative rather than competitive learning, shared leadership and shared decision-making.

iii. Program content is 'women-centred', i.e. 'women's experiences, culture and knowledge form the frame-work through which all aspects of curriculum are studied and evaluated.'[3]

iv. 'Learning' is seen as having a number of dimensions; it is personal as well as social and political and it is both affective and cognitive. Teaching in the programme seeks to integrate these different dimensions, for example, by linking personal experience with a broader framework of knowledge, and by allowing for and supporting personal and emotional growth, together with the acquisition of new knowledge.

v. The programme recognises that learning also takes place outside the 'classroom' and encouragement is given to such things as informal sharing during coffee breaks and over lunch, individual learning through the provision of a library, and informal counselling and support.

Programme planning is a shared process with the co-ordinator, tutors and participants. The final responsibility rests with the co-ordinator. A variety of methods have been used to gain participant input. These include questionnaires, discussion with individuals and dialogue between the co-ordinator and participants which regularly takes place on a group by group basis. This latter method has proved to be the most effective. Participants are asked to share their views on their current classes, their own goals and objectives for their learning and any specific needs/objectives identified by them. When placed against a background of 'informal over lunch' feedback, this process identifies issues facing participants, the life directions and decisions they are involved in, and the relevance of the learning programmes to these.

Regular discussion takes place between tutors and the co-ordinator. In addition, tutors and co-ordinators meet for the purpose of jointly planning programmes each semester.

Methods used to obtain community input include discussions between the co-ordinator and community workers, teachers and participants in other learning programmes, such as Women's programmes at the TAFE College and generally 'keeping an ear to the ground' by maintaining links with a variety of community groups. Other inputs include the use of existing data such as demographic data and unemployment figures and information about programmes in other communities.

Current policy is to give high priority to processes which enable the programme to evolve and improve rather than just expand. Aspects of this policy include the following principles:

i. The limitation of the co-ordinator's teaching hours to two hours per week to ensure maximum opportunity to enhance informal feedback from participants and to enable ongoing support for tutors.

ii. The allocation of funds to pay sessional tutors to attend regular meetings for the purpose of sharing achievements, experiences, difficulties, and skills and approaches to planning.

iii. The allocation of funds for staff development, both for local initiatives and for staff to attend other programmes. (Tutors, however, are not paid for the time given to staff development activities. In spite of this, they have been extremely committed and all have participated in several staff development activities over the past 12 months.)

iv. Evaluation is a constant and integral part of the programme, and preference is given to informal processes, such as those already mentioned. Recently, the advisory committee recognised the need for a more formal evaluation, but attempts to gain funds for this have been unsuccessful.

The programme is promoted as part of the general programme of the C.E.C., as well as separately, by brochure, radio and television announcements. A 'coffee enrolment morning' is held before each programme commences, enabling prospective participants to meet tutors and the co-ordinator and discuss

their needs. A recent innovation has been a booklet entitled 'Women's Learning in Albury-Wodonga', which informs women of the variety of learning opportunities in the area.

Throughout the programme, tutors and the co-ordinator work to enhance a sense of belonging. Creating a caring, warm environment, encouraging communal lunches, following up participants who miss a class and referring women to appropriate counsellors are all part of this process.

OUTCOMES

The stated aims of the programme are to to provide a range of courses designed for women which restore or develop confidence, open up new opportunities, be they further study or work, examine issues which are particularly relevant to women, examine issues from a women's point of view, increase women's skills to handle a range of issues and problems within the community and redress imbalances in educational opportunities. The programme provides a comfortable and informal environment in which women can share and learn from each other. It provides opportunities for women to be involved in the planning and development of their own educational opportunities so that these are sensitive to their goals and interests and create pathways relevant to them.

The programme also aims to mix the provision of learning opportunities in such things as crafts with the provision of Women's Access programmes so that women can be encouraged to move between these opportunities. Lastly, it provides information about other learning opportunities and support to women who wish to pursue them. The advisory committee has added the over-riding objective of seeking first to provide learning opportunities to women suffering the greatest disadvantage, be that because of social, personal, financial or educational reasons.

One of the methods used to 'gain agreements' on objectives is to ensure that participants have adequate information so they can match their own requirements with the particular courses in which they are enrolling. The introduction of a coffee enrolment session with tutors has greatly improved that process although, since participants are still able to enrol without attending, there is still room for mis-match. In addition, the teaching methodology involves jointly establishing plans and of reviewing these throughout the programme.

The importance of the programme to participants and the positive effect on their lives is indicated by what they have said in discussions and written comments, by the changes evident in their attitudes and by the directions they take after participating in the programme. Overall, there has been a high and increasing commitment to the programme, both in terms of enrolment attendance and the level of general enthusiasm. In its three years of operation, only two out of approximately fifty courses have been cancelled because of low enrolment. Women often express their enthusiasm, eagerness and delight in

their learning experiences. One participant captured these feelings well in a short article entitled "I am able to write". She concluded: "I feel like a kid that learned to whistle and now wants to blow wonderful tunes."[4]

Women frequently comment on their increased ability to make their own decisions, their increased confidence and their raised self-esteem. One student wrote on an evaluation form: "...it was very beneficial to my self esteem. I feel I am commanding more respect than ever before." Another learned "...to make decisions by (her) self." Some women make important life decisions. These can involve decisions relating to work outside the home or further study, or they can be far-reaching and painful personal decisions. Some women go on to further learning opportunities. For example, of 29 participants at the end of 1986, ten have continued in the Women's Access Programme, six have enrolled in the full-time 'New Opportunities for Women" program at the Albury College of T.A.F.E. and another five are undertaking other study, including tertiary studies.

INPUTS

The participants are women who are mainly in the age group 20-49 years. In 1986, for example, 23 percent of participants were between twenty and twenty-nine years, 37 percent were thirty to thirty-nine years and 31 percent were forty to forty- nine years.

The largest group - 62 percent in 1986 - describe themselves as engaged in 'full-time home duties', although a number also have paid part-time work. This no doubt reflects the fact that most programmes are offered during the day.

The participants are diverse in their family responsibilities. For example, about one-fifth of the 1986 participants described themselves as having no responsibility for children: another quarter currently had responsibility for pre-school age children, whilst the remainder had school-age children. Over one-quarter of the enrolments in 1986 were from sole parents. The majority of participants (62 percent in 1986) have completed year 10 or less of formal schooling, with a few having completed higher schooling. Finally, it is notable that participants come from a wide geographic area, i.e., both from Albury and Wodonga and the surrounding area. Some women travel at least 50 km.

The programme is staffed by a co-ordinator, employed on a permanent basis for twenty hours per week and sessional tutors. The number of tutors at any one time varies, but is usually five. Each conducts a two-hour session once a week. Tutors are not necessarily teacher-trained, although often they are. They are employed because of their understanding of mature age women, their interpersonal skills, and their understanding of the teaching philosophy and methodology, as well as their teaching

skills and knowledge of their subject area. The stability of the tutor group over the last two years has been a very important factor in the development of the programme.

The major source of funding for the programmes comes from a recurrent grant from Victoria, through its Technical & Further Education (T.A.F.E.) system. This is $15,000 which is allocated to the co-ordinator's salary, administrative costs, promotion, tutor support and programme development. The majority of tutor sessional fees are also derived from T.A.F.E. Victoria, which provides "Access and Preparatory" funds to the C.E.C. The C.E.C. allocates a proportion, currently approximately 16 percent of its budget, to Women's Access programmes. This is 300 hours per year, or $6,900. The C.E.C. subsidises the programme by providing assistance with administrative support, accommodation, promotion, child-care and staff development. New South Wales T.A.F.E. Outreach Department has provided tutor fees and limited child-care costs for some programmes in Albury which the Women's Access programmes has initiated. Minimal fees are charged for programmes amounting to approximately $1 per session. Approximately $1,700 per annum is generated in this way.

The major facility used is the C.E.C., which provides classrooms, recreation lounge and a child-care facility (see below). The building is an old school which is gradually being modified for adult use.

Programmes are also conducted in other locations such as Neighbourhood Houses, the Women's Centre, and a local Primary School. All daytime locations must have a minimum of two rooms - a classroom and a child-care room.

The equipment and materials provided are of a very limited nature. Most teaching aids, such as Audio-Visual aids, must be hired, although the C.E.C. does now own a video player and photocopier. Tutors frequently arrange their own materials and/or work with a minimum of equipment. The creation of a small Women's Access Library focusing on fiction and non-fiction books about women has been important for the programme and is well used by tutors and participants.

OTHER

The Mobile Child-care Scheme, which supports the Women's Access Programme and other local community education programmes, was a development unique to the Albury-Wodonga area and a direct result of the development of the Women's Access Programme. In essence, the service consists of a number of trained and untrained workers, a co-ordinator, equipment and worker hours. It provides on site, quality child-care where a programme is being conducted. The main core of funding comes for the Federal Office of Child Care, but additional funds are from other sources such as T.A.F.E. Victoria. "The child care provision is, possibly, the single most important measure in providing access to learning opportunities for women with young children."[5]

EVALUATION

The Women's Access Programme commenced in 1983 when the C.E.C. received a small grant from T.A.F.E. Victoria. The stated purpose of the project was: "...to explore ways to reach out to women as yet not involved in T.A.F.E. programmes to identify reasons for their non-involvement, to adopt learning opportunities to overcome such barriers so that the whole range of T.A.F.E. programmes become open to them."[6] The initial research explored existing participation of women in post-secondary education, barriers to their access and successful projects elsewhere. As a result, it recommended: the development of a programme of short courses integrated into a one-day programme at the Continuing Education Centre; an Outreach programme; continued support and development of the Mobile Child Care facility; and the development and support of a network of women working within educational institutions. The goals of the initial programmes have been stated earlier in this report.

The major trends that have occurred since this time have been in the direction of refining the goals and objectives and making these and the programme more specific in focus. The main trends have been:

i. Narrowing the focus in order to concentrate on women with greatest need.This has encouraged changes in, for example, advertising strategies and programming. Advertising strategies now more clearly target women who "left school early" or "who feel nervous about returning to study". Programmes are less likely to be traditional "school type subjects" such as history, literature, etc. More emphasis is placed on "multi-disciplinary" courses, such as Women's Studies, on flexible courses with some personal development component, such as 'Stepping Stones', or Women's Learning Group.

ii. The development of a policy to direct more resources to a smaller group rather than expanding the programme to more women. This has meant, for example, that some additional courses are developed during the programme, and only offered to current participants.

iii. An emphasis on the programme as an 'Access' programme rather than one in which women return year after year. This does not mean, of course, that women are expected to enrol for only a specified period. Rather, it means that: the general programme of the C.E.C. has been encouraged to develop programmes suitable for women wishing to continue in non-formal, adult education, rather than pursue accredited courses; and there is emphasis on the provision of information counselling and contacts with other educational fields, so that women are assisted to find their appropriate next ctep. This is regarded as a very important part of the Co-ordinators role.

INFLUENCES

The most profound and formative influence on the programme has been the continued growth and development of the Women's Movement, and of feminist thought and analysis. These have been instrumental in:

i. raising community awareness about women's rights, thus encouraging women to seek out programmes as well as supporting their development;

ii. the development of government policies, such as the recent Victorian TAFE Board Women's Policy and Child Care Policy, which provide a framework for Women's programmes to pursue funding;

iii. the development of a strong local network of women, which has provided human support and resources to the programme; and

iv. the development of a critical analysis of the education system, how it has worked to the detriment of women, and how women's educational interests can be pursued.

The environment of a community-based organisation and in particular of the C.E.C. has also been very important. Particular strengths include: the flexibility which a community-based organisation offers; the openness and support of both the C.E.C.'s staff and Committee of Management; and the degree of autonomy given to the programme to develop its appropriate objectives, methodology, staffing, content, structure, etc. The evolving recognition by the Victorian TAFE Board of the legitimacy and importance of community-based adult education has opened access to some previously unavailable resources such as recurrent funding, and staff development opportunities. The development of the Mobile Child Care Scheme has underpinned the entire Women's Access Programme.

A lack of resources is the single most limiting factor, in spite of the trends noted above. Funding currently is insufficient to cover the legitimate requirements of the programme. In particular, tutors are not paid for much of the work they do; there is no funding for the programme to expand, regardless of need; access to resources such as equipment, materials, etc., is more limited than would be available to a College-based programme; and the need to charge a fee, although small, is an inhibiting factor for many women.

It is increasingly apparent that a Government focus on 'vocational' education will influence educational priorities. Traditional concepts of 'vocational' education have been found to be inappropriate when applied to much of women's education. These new trends may counteract some of the more favourable trends noted above, thus acting against the interests of programmes such as this one.

Footnotes.

1. FREIRE, Paulo: Pedagogy of the Oppressed: Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972.
2. THOMPSON, Jane: Learning Liberation: Women's Response to Men's Education. London: Croom Helm, 1983.
3. Feminist Learning Project. Feminist Learning at the Council of Adult Education in Network of Wom
4. BIHLER, Ady: "Women's Work" in Women's Access Magazine, p.43.
5. Ibid, p.33.
6. Op.cit., p.5.

WORKPLACE BASIC EDUCATION PROJECT

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Victorian Council of Adult Education

INTRODUCTION

The Workplace Basic Education Project conducts classes in a range of workplaces in Victoria in both the public and private sectors. Because the nature of each class varies dramatically from one workplace to another it is difficult to describe a "typical" participant. For the purpose of this case study, therefore, we have elected to describe three different writing classes, as follows:

i. Dockyard Writing, conducted at Williamstown Naval Dockyard for 15 weeks from June to November, 1985, two hours per week (12 students);
ii. Writing for Minute-Taking, conducted at General Motors Holden over 20 weeks, from October 1986 to March 1987, two hours per week (12 students); and
iii. Writing One; conducted at the Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works, Werribee Farm, for 40 weeks from August 1986 to July 1987, three hours per week (10 students).

PROCESS

In each class, the curriculum is student-centred and flexible to allow for individual needs and interests. Where courses have been established through an in-house advertising process, the overall direction of the course is predetermined. This is self-evident in the "Minute-Taking Course." "Dockyard Writing" publicity indicated that the class would aim to produce a booklet of writing about the dockyards which included some history. However, in all three classes, details of content were negotiated with students. Strategies are employed to encourage students to take an active role in determining what they are taught. Course content reflects domestic, community or personal concerns as well as work related issues.

In teaching basic writing skills, tutors use the 'whole language' approach and encourage 'process writing' strategies. A 'whole language' approach is one where all the elements of language used are exercised; speaking, listening, writing and reading. The elements are not seen as discrete but rather are integrated in the learning process. 'Process Writing' is the practice of writing in drafts or stages, initial emphasis being on the content of writing and the way ideas are expressed. As a means of focussing on content, the writer may 'conference' with the teacher or other class members and discuss how the writing could be changed or improved upon. Mechanical skills in writing, e.g., spelling, grammar and punctuation are improved or worked on by the author as he/she becomes aware of the need to eliminate

errors. This depends on who the 'audience' will be, i.e., who will be reading that piece of writing, the writer only, other students, workplace staff or readers of a newspaper. These approaches are modified to meet student expectation. In practice this means that discussion and reading are seen as an integral part of the writing process. Students write for different 'audiences'- private journal writing, "published" class booklets, correspondence with management, contributions to newspapers. Collective and individual writing tasks are undertaken and all activities are designed so that students work at their own pace and those needing individual attention are assisted.

Two tutors work together in each of the three courses being examined. This allows greater flexibility in class groupings, for example, individual tuition, small groups, the whole group, and working in pairs. Students are asked to comment on which groupings they find comfortable and useful.

Complementary skills of tutors are enhanced by team-teaching. In the "Minute-Taking" class, an experienced tutor supports and encourages a tutor new to the Project. In "Dockyard Writing", two tutors with different styles, methodologies and backgrounds are able to fuse history with personal writing. In this way, the needs of both beginning and more advanced writers are met.

Some of the materials used in classes are drawn from the workplaces in the form of memos, job applications, minutes and pro forma. Classes also draw on publications from the workplace such as workplace history and publicity material. Newspaper articles, short stories, and novels often stimulate discussions. Excursions into the workplace or visits from guest speakers are woven into the development of themes. Role-play and video are used extensively in the minute-taking class.

Project co-ordinators approach training or personnel officers in the company to discuss what the project offers, its mode of operation and the needs of the company. At this stage agreement is sought on the following principles: paid educational leave; the establishment of a tripartite planning group (Unions, Management and Project Staff), student-centred curriculum; and open advertising of classes so that all who wish to apply for classes are considered.

The recruitment process calls for a sensitive approach. All workers need to be aware of the course and have access to it. They may need support from supervisors and workmates, but the process must not embarrass or coerce potential applicants. Courses are relatively short. Many students need to continue their studies after this course is completed. Project staff are developing a tutor's kit which will assist students in finding further tuition on completion of the course.

Project staff meet groups of supervisors and the Shop Committee to gain support for the classes. During this process, Project staff gain knowledge and understanding of each company - its concerns, style of management, and the relevant industrial issues. At the same time, Project staff gather information regarding the kind of basic education needs of employees. The establishment of the planning group is

central to the process of organizing and conducting classes in each workplace. The company, union, Project co-ordinators, tutors and students are represented. The planning group decides whether a survey of workers' educational needs will be conducted or whether specific courses will be offered and applications sought.

Two of the classes, "Writing for Minute-Taking" and "Dockyard Writing", were decided by planning group members based on their knowledge of the workplace. Broad course outlines were drawn up, and the courses advertised through internal memos, workplace journals, posters or leaflets. Perhaps the most effective means was by word-of-mouth, through the unions and line management. Applicants were then interviewed by Project staff and education criteria were used in selecting a compatible group. The third class, "Writing One", at Werribee Farm, was one of a range of classes recommended by Project staff after conducting a survey of 85 interested employees. The survey was based on half-hour interviews with each applicant. In all classes, the planning group organised time release, the booking of suitable rooms for the class and provision of tables, chairs and whiteboards.

Planning Meeting at the Williamstown Naval Dockyards

Tutors benefit from regular inservice training on a variety of relevant educational topics. In addition, regular meetings of tutors working across a range of workplaces are held to promote the sharing of ideas and concerns. Team-teaching provides a similar function. A regular bulletin provides tutors with information and ideas.

OUTCOMES

The principle aim of the Project has been "To deliver Basic Education to workers whose future stable employment may be at risk because of their levels of education." (Memorandum of agreement from original funding body.) A major goal has been to enable workers to participate more effectively in decision-making about work processes. The project also aims to assist workers to take advantage of training and retraining programs. Many would previously have been excluded because of poor literacy and numeracy skills. In order to make these opportunities widely available, a broad aim has been to promote acceptance of the principle of paid educational leave for workers.

Specific aims of classes referred to in this case study included: improved writing and reading skills and confidence in their application; development of new skills such as minute- taking; increased autonomy in learning as individual learners and as members of a group; and power to communicate fluently and effectively. The detailed aims in each class are framed by tutors in consultation with participants and are subject to ongoing review. Confirmation of these aims is gained through the planning group.

The Project's policies and processes are overseen by an advisory group which includes industry, union and government representatives.

Courses are evaluated in a number of ways. Tutors and students regularly evaluate the course. Team-teaching encourages constructive criticism and a combined search for ways of improving courses. Both structured and informal feedback from students are part of this process. Because they are held in paid work-time, courses are often under scrutiny from workplace personnel who participate in Planning Group evaluations. In addition, tutors and Project co-ordinators write a report on completion of the class and these reports are presented to the Planning Group for comment.

Rather than defining benefits as a linear development of specific skills, we seek the testimony of worker/participants, shop floor representatives, and employers and supervisors. Letters from employers to the advisory committee indicate long-term benefits to the company. Employers have said that the classes are: "bridging the gap between the educated and the uneducated, creating better communications and working relations"; "creating goodwill with the employer being seen as doing something positive"; and "enhancing personal growth and advancement." Some supervisors noted changes in individual students. For instance, one stated that, "Some are taking on the challenge of new roles at the workplace ... and others are continuing to further study." Other supervisors saw no immediate benefit.

Union representatives have also responded. One person, the secretary of a shop committee noted: "The format of the course involved lengthy reading and comprehension. Many participants involved have shown a marked improvement. One man, Mr.X, was able to obtain his D.L.I. crane driving licence as a result of the course." A chairman of a shop committee said of a fellow student: "I saw a man, who could only write his name, learn how to write a whole sentence and get it right, and it didn't matter how long it took him to write the sentence. All that mattered was that he did it, so I would not change a thing". Another union representative commented that: "The class has been fantastic. It's only been going for a little while. Some of those blokes never used to talk; they've really opened up."

The following are representative comments made by the students themselves concerning the effect the courses have had on them:

"The morale of the people involved in the classes has
doubled which shows down on the job."
"Since I started these classes in worktime my life is different in the work area and outside. I can spell, write, understand better."
"I've gained more confidence in writing and an ability to write down more of my ideas on paper and polished a bit more on my spelling and punctuation."
"I'm not so nervous about talking to people in management. I feel more comfortable in saying what I want to say because I have more confidence in myself."

INPUTS

Each class has 10 participants. "Writing for Minute-Taking" has had men and women participants from clerical and trade areas who have been given additional organizational responsibilities. The other classes have only men who work in skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled occupations. The classes contain Australian-born people who have identified their need to improve their writing/reading skills and include some, who for a range of reasons, are absolute beginners in literacy. Adults from non-English-speaking backgrounds, who now speak English fluently but who wish to improve writing skills, also participate in the class. The level of schooling completed by the participants varies enormously from just a few years of primary schooling to those who have had up to 11 years at school. Employees who have successfully completed secondary education are not eligible.

The Project's work is undertaken by a team of: four full- time workers, three of whom are co-ordinators responsible for administration, negotiation, liaison and policy development; five part-time adult education workers who combine curriculum and resource development and support work with tutoring; and 30 sessional tutors who are contracted for their teaching time and associated preparation and liaison with the workplace.

The average tutor to student ratio per class is one to five. Most of the tutors have teaching qualifications but not all have experience in adult education or involvement in industry. The tutors, most of whom are women, have undertaken the Project's introductory training course.

Learning Together

The Project had been fully funded by the Department of Labour and now receives State Technical and Further Education funding. Workplace Basic Education has been provided free of charge to participants and to employers. However, employers pay in kind through the lost production time of ten participants per class.

Classes are taught at the workplace and venues vary from makeshift accommodation to carpeted, sound-proofed, training rooms. The "Dockyard Writing" class was held in a 'relocatable' which doubles as a band practice room and lunchroom. The GMH "Writing for Minute-Taking" classes was held in the TQC (Total Quality Control) Training Centre where all equipment was supplied. The Board of Works provided a spacious and well-equipped room for "Writing One" at Werribee Farm as well as arranging access to photocopying and other facilities. Tutors, however, still need to transport some equipment and teaching materials. The Project has its own specialised resources collection from which tutors can distribute reading and other materials on a long-term loan.

EVOLUTION

The Workplace Basic Education Project operates in an industrial context influenced by concern in industry for achieving increased efficiency and competitiveness, increasingly rapid technological and work pattern changes, concern to broaden the base of consultation in decision-making, and concern to maintain jobs and generate new areas of employment.

Education and training have a major role to play in the creation of a broadly-skilled and adaptable workforce which is able to meet the challenge of these changes in industry. There is an urgent need for training and retraining to improve work skills and develop job mobility and flexibility. To be effective in the long term such training needs to be of high quality and broadly-based. The most effective use of new technologies calls for a creativity and adaptability involving people at all levels in making decisions about work processes. Education assists workers to participate more effectively in this process. Despite a growing awareness of the need for training and retraining in industry, there is little tradition of worker basic education in Australia.

Victoria has a well-established tradition of adult literacy provision. Those working in this field were, to some extent, aware of the need for basic education provision for people in the paid workforce who often had difficulty in maintaining attendance at evening classes after a day's work or in making arrangements which enabled them to attend. Co-ordinators and tutors in adult literacy and basic education also recognized that many students were reluctant to approach educational institutions.

The Victorian Adult Literacy Council supported early moves to develop workplace basic education. The Education Department, through its Adult Migrant Education Service provision for English as a Second Language (ESL) in workplaces, has operated for about ten years although it has not employed the same processes and structures used by the Workplace Basic Education Project. In many ways, the AMES Industrial Language Programme helped heighten the awareness of the need for wider basic education provision in workplaces.

The Project developed from the concerns and interests of three specific groups; government, (the Victorian State Labour Government), the Amalgamated Metal Workers Union (AMWU), and the Council of Adult Education (CAE). The AMWU, one of the unions with an interest in education beyond traditional trade union training, had been involved in Study Circles. Its industrial democracy campaigns have had a strong educational component. It has also influenced government policy and practice in this area.

The Council of Adult Education's Access Department was keen to extend its work to groups otherwise not catered for. It wrote a proposal for workplace provision in literacy and basic education whereby the tutors would go to the students at the workplace rather than students coming to an educational institution.

The government (at the time the State Ministry of Employment and Training now called the Department of Labour) entered into discussions with the Council of Adult Education with a view to funding a project which would fit its criteria of training for "at risk" workers. The Department was also keen to fund a project to develop delivery strategies. At the time of the first funding there was little if any educational provision at this level and of this type.

INFLUENCES

In the last few years, trade unions have become more aware of the need for basic education. This has been assisted recently by the support we have gained from the Victorian Trades and Labour Council. Particular unions such as the Australian Railways Union have also been more concerned about how workers are taught. One result of this has been the establishment of an English On The Job Project about the same time as this project began. The EOJ Project has provided a new model of ESL tuition in worktime. The curriculum is student-centred, and planning and management is conducted through a tripartite committee. Although confined to migrants working in the State Transport Authority, the convergence of principles and processes espoused by both the English On the Job and the Workplace Basic Education Project has helped to reinforce important issues.

The influence of new management techniques in the private sector has resulted in an increasing number of private companies wishing to consider introducing Workplace Basic Education.

The recognition of the success of the Project has also resulted in ongoing funding.

Problems in the economy have had an adverse effect on particular industries and in particular the manufacturing industry. Cutbacks in spending and redundancies have made it difficult for the Project to establish ongoing provision in some workplaces in the public sector. Other companies are reluctant to commit any expenditure on paid time release unless short term benefits to productivity will result. Limiting classes to meet this criteria is educationally unsound.

WOMEN'S HEALTH, THE MIDDLE YEARS.

D. Degeling,
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INTRODUCTION

Menopause is the time when a woman's periods cease. This is a natural occurrence in the life stage referred to as 'the climacteric'. In some cultures this is when a woman's role and position in society changes to a higher status. She is seen as being wise, knowledgeable about life and is held in great esteem by the community.

In Western culture, menopause is usually associated with the beginning of ageing. Women are no longer seen as being useful, productive members of society but are often described as "dried up", "unattractive" and by implication "asexual". This stereotype, expressed in so many ways, e.g., through the media, lack of employment opportunities, and lack of specific health services, also affects the way women see themselves. Often they have low self-esteem and lack self-worth. This in turn may affect their mental and physical health. For many women the physical changes of menopause occur at a time when their family is restructuring.

This programme gives women information, skills and support to self-care, to clarify and reassess their role and make choices for the future. The women's health education programme has two major components: a Resource Manual of thirteen modules (covering twelve health topics and one alternative session format); and a Training Workshop for educators in the conduct of the programme.

PROCESS

Many women who attend programmes in the community have had little access to formal education, perhaps did not finish their schooling, and are unused to the process of formal learning. Therefore, an informal approach to learning was adopted using small groups for the demonstration of practical skills and a sharing of learning experiences. In this programme women gain information, resources and other sources of help, practice in decision-making, skills in self-care, and support to make choices. To this end the Manual and Training Workshop used the following methods of teaching and learning.

Methods of teaching and learning

Co-leading. This was used to assist trainee educators to make clear distinctions between the experience of participating in a group exercise and that of reflecting on the skills required as a facilitator to conduct such an exercise themselves.

Modelling. Trainers deliberately modelled such things as appropriate and non-technical use of language, simple explanation of concepts, skills in processing discussion and group exercises.

Experimental learning through participation plus reflection. This was an essential learning activity; trainees experienced many of the group activities outlined in the community education programme. They then took one step back to review the process and the skills required to lead a group activity.

Practice plus feedback. Trainees also practised the teaching and group dynamic skills and independent group exercises with the trainer and group feedback.

Materials. The Resource Manual for the trainee educators provides background information on a number of pre- determined, health-related subjects relevant to women in their middle years. The extent of the information included is limited to that appropriate to the learning needs of prospective client groups in the community. Levels of language and explanation or concepts in the text deliberately model appropriate use of language with these client groups (i.e. non-professionals). However the correct technical term together with the non-technical term is used throughout the Manual to equip women with the "language" to describe their symptoms and health status.

Each topic in the manual includes a suggested session plan for conducting a programme in the community. Session plans document the four essential components of the educational process: learning objectives; content; educational activities; and useful learning aids. This format was deliberately chosen to model the process of teaching and learning and to assist trainee educators to move away from their tendency to adopt the didactic mode to a more active and interactive style of group leadership. Teaching guidelines give additional pointers and suggestions to increase the effectiveness of the educational process in the community venue. Description of exercises and activities outline suggested steps in processing each of the recommended group exercises. For participants, these model a clear explanation of the steps in processing, the likely and desired outcomes, and the opportunity for reflection, an important component of adult non-formal education.

Additional educational resources considered appropriate for community groups and settings are masters for the duplication of handouts and for thermofax preparation of overhead transparencies, instructions for preparing posters to be displayed during the programme, and lists and addresses of easily available subject-related reading for community groups. These include pamphlets, sources of models for teaching, lists of established community groups and associations for further support and networking.

Staff conducting the training programme continually improve their knowledge and skills by attending workshops, seminars, conferences and keeping up with the current literature on teaching and learning. Content areas of the manual are reviewed when the state of knowledge changes. This is occurring particularly in relation to the contribution of breast self-examination to the early detection of breast cancer and the usefulness of diet and exercise in the prevention of osteoporosis. Both of these areas are generating a lot of research at present.

Originally the manual and training workshops were advertised using established mailing lists such as the NSW Health Department, community health centres and hospitals. Health professionals and health educators who had expressed prior interest were also informed. A programme of planned workshops is circulated every three to six months as a reminder. Many participants come as a result of word of mouth recommendation. A booking system operates to assist in planning. Workshops held outside Westmead Hospital are negotiated on an individual basis.

OUTCOMES

The goal of the project is to improve the health status of women aged thirty-five plus by providing them with the necessary skills, information and resources on matters affecting their health. The anticipated outcome is that they will have better self-care and be more informed in their help-seeking behaviour. This is achieved by training educators to conduct the programme in their community and by providing the resources to do so. Training workshop objectives are to:

i. access the material available in the manual and use this as a basic resource in planning and implementing their own middle years/menopause education programme in the community;
ii. select information from the manual that meets the needs of different community groups;
iii. arrange and process appropriate and relevant group activities and exercises that reinforce information in the manual; and
iv. provide appropriate and available resources that complement the learning needs of these different groups.

Training workshops have been evaluated using an informal small group technique to elicit expectations at the beginning, and subjective evaluations at the end of each training programme. Questions asked are as follows: "What were the main benefits for you from the workshop?", "What things would you like to have heard more about?", "What changes would you suggest for future workshops?" Responses are recorded on butchers paper by the group members. The workshop trainer is not involved in this process. These evaluations show that educators attend the workshops for a range of professional and personal reasons.

Expectations for the workshop expressed by more than 25 per cent of the small groups are the following range of issues, listed in priority order:

information,
groups skills,
health promotion skills,
professional and personal networking,
teaching skills,
increasing own awareness of women's issues,
facilitating own personal growth,

knowledge of appropriate resources,
increasing personal confidence, and gaining
familiarity with the manual.

Overall, evaluations of the workshop are very positive, suggestions for improvement often being qualified by reference to the limitations of time. Evaluation comments fall into four main categories: requests for more information on specific subjects, particularly hormone replacement therapy, sexuality, stress management and self esteem; comments relating to the presentation of material - more frequent use of guest facilitators for both variety of presentation and to relieve the load on the trainer; opportunity for group members to participate in the teaching process, and the use of role-playing as a workshop teaching tool; and requests for follow-up workshops or sessions.

Women's Health, The Middle Years programme objectives

Each module in the resource manual has topic-specific, overall aims. For example, in the Menopause module the aims are to: raise women's awareness of the physical aspects of menopause, provide enough information to enable the educator to answer questions about the physical aspects of menopause, provide accurate information about treatments currently available for menopause symptoms, and convey a positive attitude about menopause as a life stage. To assist the educator to achieve these aims each module contains a section on session planning which includes session objectives for the participants. In the Menopause Module, as an example, participants in this session will be better able to:

i. recognise menopause as a normal life stage;
ii. differentiate between the climacteric and menopause;
iii. separate myths from facts about menopause;
iv. use a basic understanding about anatomy and physiology relevant to menopause to assist in decision-making about personal health care;
v. consider self-help as one beneficial option for personal health care during this life stage;
vi. identify appropriate health services for self-referral and possible menopausal-related health problems;
vii. recognise the relationship between menopause and hysterectomy.
viii. use post-menopausal bleeding as a warning sign to quickly seek medical attention; and
ix. recognise and use appropriate menopause-related terminology when talking to health care providers.

Used in conjunction with supplied Suggested Session Formats the educator is able to meet these aims and objectives. An evaluation questionnaire is included for the educator to monitor this and to identify any other required information.

INPUTS

Those who participate in the Women's Health Manual Training Workshops are health professionals, health educators and others interested from government and non-government organisations, voluntary associations and the community. A wide range of health and education backgrounds are represented, for example: general practitioners, community nurses, nurse educators, social workers, psychologists, deaconesses, nuns, community educators, teachers from Colleges of Technical and Further Education, Evening Colleges, Women's Health Centres, community groups such as women's information centres, Combined Pensioners Association and many others. After attending the training workshop participants conduct programmes for women in their local communities.

The women's health project is currently staffed by a senior project officer who manages the project and a training officer. A maximum of twenty participants can attend a workshop. Two training workshops of four days duration are conducted each month, one at Westmead Hospital, the other in another area, region or state of Australia. To date these workshops have been conducted in NSW, Victoria and Queensland although resource manuals have gone to all states of Australia and New Zealand.

'The Women's Health, the Middle Years Manual' is sold at cost ($85 each) and this fee includes one place at a workshop. For those who do not require a manual the workshop attendance fee is $25. Training workshops conducted within NSW are sponsored by the Women's Health Unit of the NSW Department of Health. Any additional charges such as accommodation and/or travelling expenses are met by the requesting organisation. For training workshops conducted outside NSW all costs are met by the area/organisation requesting the workshop. The equipment required to conduct the training workshops is: a large room, overhead projector, video monitor, black/white board, butchers paper, pens and blue tac. The women's health project has a collection of information resources, books, pamphlets and videos which are displayed and may be borrowed by the participants for the duration of the workshop.

EVALUATION

The Women's Health Project was initiated in September 1983. The project was in response to the recognised but unmet health needs of women in their middle years in the western metropolitan health region of Sydney.

The programme consisted of one-off information sessions to raise women's awareness about menopause. Breast self-examination was included because the most at-risk group for breast cancer was within the project's target of the 40 to 60+ years age group.

The programme was tailored to the time available and to the expressed needs of the group. Session length varied from one hour to three hours. Sessions were held in work places, social clubs, community information centres, community health centres and hospitals. Where possible, workplace sessions were held over two lunch hours.

Two- or three-hour sessions covered simple anatomy and physiology of the reproductive system with emphasis on the hormone cycle; signs and symptoms of menopause and available treatments from both traditional medicine and alternative practitioners; the effect of emotional, social and cultural factors on women and ageing; self-help measures appropriate to menopause and mid-life, e.g., stress management, diet, exercise; the simple anatomy of the breasts, indications of breast cancer, the importance of early detection and a demonstration of the technique of breast self-examination. Visual aids and films on menopause and breast self-examination were presented if time allowed.

Telephone calls and/or letters were sent to community groups and businesses in the region advising them of the availability of the programme.

Contact was also made with the headquarters of network organisations such as Civilian Widows and the Catholic Family Welfare Bureau advising them of the service and asking that this advice be referred to their branches in the region and/or placed in their newsletters. Health Education Officers in the region were informed of the programme and requested to make use of the service and to make its availability known. Opportunity to attend the programme was made available to staff at Westmead Hospital.

Meetings were held with ethnic health workers to discuss the issues of menopause in a cultural framework and to heighten the awareness of the need to address these issues. Information and resource sessions were held for health workers interested in learning more about the programme's content.

A one and a half-day session was held for teams from community health centres in the region who were interested in developing menopause education/support group programmes.

These programmes were evaluated using pre- and post-test questionnaires to determine: whether the target groups were reached; whether knowledge changed; the proportion of women attending the session who practised BSE and of those what proportion practised correctly; an indication of the sorts of symptoms women who attended the sessions may have been experiencing; and the issues relating to menopause and BSE on which women required further information.

By 30th June, 1984 it is estimated that 900 women across the region had attended the sessions. However, the sessions conducted in the months of April and May 1984 were selected in advance for

evaluation. The total number of women attending sessions during that period was 346. Their age distribution ranged from 25 to 77 years (mean age = 47). Even with the wide range of ages, 73 per cent of the distribution fell within the target groups' ages of 40-60 years.

A simple knowledge questionnaire used at the sessions suggested that pre-existing levels of knowledge about menopause and breast self-examination were consistent across different groups of women. Despite varied backgrounds, the average proportion of correct answers on the pre-test were very similar. The post scores on the same questionnaire used at the end of the session indicated that when exposed to information about menopause and breast self-examination women made significant gains in knowledge.

Evaluation of the programme demonstrated a lack of knowledge of breast self-examination. The pre- and post-test scores on the breast self-examination items of the evaluation questionnaire suggested that while less than 16 per cent of women had sufficient knowledge to practice breast self-examination correctly at the beginning of the session, this figure increased to 86 per cent after exposure to the session material.

Of the women attending the sessions 67 per cent claimed to practise BSE. Of those women who did practise BSE, less than half did so at the recommended interval of once a month. Women attending menopause awareness sessions were asked to indicate which, if any, of a range of symptoms they may have been experiencing. No indication of severity of symptoms was given. Overall more than 50 per cent of women reported irritability and tenseness, 47 per cent reported headaches, and 44 per cent reported depression. Only 6 per cent reported being symptom-free.

When asked which topics they would like more information about, women expressed interest in diet, personal growth, exercise, hormonal changes, depression and osteoporosis.

From the evaluation questionnaires and from speaking with the women who attended the programmes many issues emerged that could not be covered in a one-off session. Few, if any, appropriate resources could be found to meet the needs of these women. Most community health centres in the region had a dearth of information about menopause and related issues. The three Women's Health Centres had some information, however, these centres are not acceptable to many women. Menopause clinics at the major teaching hospitals were oriented to the woman suffering from her symptoms, rather than the woman seeking information or self-help measures. Resource material from other regions did not seem to meet all the requirements of the women in the community. It became apparent that the existing resources would have to be collated and new resources developed to meet the need in the community. Women wanted the necessary skills, information and resources on matters affecting their health.

A modular format was chosen for the manual. Conceptually, the material was developed around five core subjects.- Menopause, Sexuality, Osteoporosis, Breast Self-Examination, and Pap Smear - with additional subjects relating to the core topics. These included: Nutrition & Weight Management, How to Help Prevent Osteoporosis by Modifying Your Eating Habits, Exercise, Hysterectomy Awareness, Introduction to Self Esteem & Confidence Building, Introduction to Stress Management, and How to Talk with Health Professionals.

During the development of the manual, consultations were held with experts in the particular areas to ascertain that all information included was accurate and reflected 'state of the art' knowledge. The modules on menopause, sexuality, osteoporosis, breast self-examination, Pap smears and talking to health professionals were developed by the Women's Health Project team; the nutrition modules by a nutritionist experienced in community education; introduction to stress management by a clinical psychologist who regularly conducts stress management programmes; introduction to self-esteem and confidence-building was written by a health educator experienced in this area. "Hysterectomy Awareness" was used with the permission of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Flinders Medical Centre, Bedford Park, South Australia. The exercise module was prepared by two physiotherapists who specialise in women's health problems.

After piloting the manual in five areas of Western Sydney and the New England Health Region of NSW another module was included: Alternative Session Formats and Support Group Guidelines. There is now a total of thirteen topics. Each module contains the aims of the module, background information, a bibliography, session planning, session objectives, participants' evaluation and knowledge-change questionnaires, teaching guidelines, a two-hour session format, group activities and exercises, handouts for duplication, resources (pamphlets, books, videos, services), resource addresses, and artwork for transparencies.

It became evident through this evaluation that whilst most health educators and health professionals have some skills in small group work these really needed to be developed further. The training workshop was extended to include a four-day option where more time can be taken to develop group leader skills. If this is not a requirement then the three-day workshop is available.

It is difficult to unravel and clearly articulate the many factors which contributed to the development of this women's health promotion programme. Primarily it is based on women's experience of the changes occurring in their bodies during mid-life and what happens when they seek help. The women who shared their experiences with us came from a diversity of cultural backgrounds, were aged between 18 and 70 years and lived in Western Sydney. Some of the women were more advantaged than others, but most were essentially working class. For many of these women, the Women's Movement, and particularly the Women's Health movement, was outside their experience. Yet, it has been paramount in

creating the climate for them being able to describe their health experience during this life stage and for us (health educators) to be here to listen.

Other major contributing influences are the Consumer Movement, the enormous growth in Alternative Medicine and the Self-Help and Self-Care movements. The latter two are linked to the disillusionment of many people with modern medicine. The medicalisation of normal lifestages, such as childbirth, death and dying, the negative outcomes of many treatments, over-servicing and the over-prescribing of tranquillisers (particularly for women) have all been documented.

Conversely, the value of preventive health practices such as regular Pap smears for the prevention of cancer of the cervix and regular breast self-examination for the early detection of cancer have also been documented in the literature and this information needed to be more widespread in the community. The realisation that health status is influenced far more by nutrition, housing, income and social support than by treatment services and that the richer you are the healthier you are likely to be, has led to a renewed interest in public health. Health promotion is sometimes called the second public health revolution. Recognition of its value facilitated the availability of funds for this project.

Funding was obtained from the Commonwealth Government for the initial stages of the project and later from the NSW Department of Health through its Western Sydney Office. Current funding is provided through the Women's Health Unit of the NSW Department of Health and Westmead Hospital.

A review of women's health services in NSW, conducted in 1984/85, confirmed the lack of information and availability of health services for women in their mid years. A women's health policy was developed covering all the health needs of women and now provides a context for the ongoing support and development of this programme. Continued funding by the Women's Health Unit has made it available to all health workers in NSW.

Another major influence on this programme is the media. Women's health topics are featured regularly in the women's magazines effectively putting health on everyone's agenda.

The changing role of women. As women now make up 49 per cent of the total Australian workforce many women have had to reappraise their role and position. Economic independence has given them more confidence in taking charge of their lives. A major reflection of this is taking control of their bodies and their health maintenance. Women already live seven years longer than men and by the year 2001, women over 35 years are expected to constitute 52 per cent of the population. The importance of women taking care of their health in their middle years to minimise ill-health in their old age, cannot be emphasised enough.

Health professionals, too, respond well to the programme and promote it among their peers. For many of them it is the first time they have had any formal training in health education. They are able to adapt the teaching skills learnt in this programme to other work settings. The flexibility of the programme facilitates its use in other contexts.

The most negative influence on programme development has been the uncertainty of the availability of funds. Since the project commenced in September 1983 it has passed through three distinct funding periods. At each of these stages uncertainty has affected the morale of the project and continuity of staffing. However, we have been fortunate in that to date Westmead Hospital has always backed the project and supported it during the changes of funding. There are no guarantees for the future.

OTHER

This programme continues to expand. A 13-minute video demonstrating the technique of breast self examination (BSE) and informing women of the value of BSE was produced in conjunction with the NSW State Cancer Council. This is available on half-inch VHS and is sold through professional outlets. Women attending the programme in the community continually asked if there was a book available for them outlining the content of the resource manual. As we were not able to refer them specifically to any such existing resource we approached the publishers, Bay Books. A companion paper back will be published in September 1987 and will be available wherever books are sold. Another module, (Module 14) is being researched at present and will be available at the end of 1987. This module will prepare educators to teach women from non-English speaking backgrounds, the topics covered in the middle years programme. Similarly a patient education resource assisting General Practitioners to teach their women patients about menopause and its management is currently being developed and will be available at the end of 1987.

This year we are evaluating components of the programme, focusing on whether the training programme is of use to educators; the usefulness of the resource manual, and the penetration of the programme in the community as well as its impact on the women who attend. The information obtained will assist us in the future planning and direction of the project. There is no sign of it losing its momentum.

THE N.S.W. BOARD OF ADULT EDUCATION LITERACY PROGRAMMES

Rosie Wickert
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INTRODUCTION

A programme aimed at teaching reading and writing to adults in need was introduced in the Evening Colleges of the New South Wales Education Department in mid-1972. The programme was given the name "Operation Literacy". The impetus came about when the Staff Inspector in charge of Evening Colleges was approached by a young man who worked as a messenger in the Department. The Staff Inspector, using a system he devised as a classroom teacher decided to teach him personally and also to start classes in a few colleges to see if there was a demand. This initiative was a breakthrough in gaining official and general recognition that a problem of adult illiteracy existed in Australia. Within three years in the State, some one thousand adults were studying reading and writing in 103 centres. Others were being catered to by volunteer tutors who were being trained to work with isolated students, particularly migrants; classes were running in sheltered workshops and hospitals; and a distance education package was brought into being.

In 1977, the N.S.W. Department of Technical and Further education (TAFE) announced its Reading and Writing Programmes for Adults and appointed the first two basic education specialists. By the end of 1987, it is anticipated that TAFE will have 200 full-time such positions and it has become, by far, the major provider of adult literacy provision in N.S.W. This report, however, will examine the literacy programme that was started in 1972 and continues to run in Evening Colleges and community centres throughout the state.

PROCESS

In the early days of literacy provision in the State, the teachers were usually primary or high school teachers who taught adult literacy as an additional job in the evenings. Possibly due to the prevalence of 'reading schemes' and kits in schools, there existed a general opinion that what was needed for adults was a "standard set of instructional materials" to work through. Accordingly, a few of these were developed and widely used in Evening College programmes. Of course, this is no longer the case as much has been learnt not only about how literacy occurs, but also about the needs and characteristics of adult learners. The pace of change in this area was rapid and it became apparent to the Board of Adult Education (since 1983 the funding body for Evening Colleges), that adult literacy teachers in Evening

Colleges needed greater professional support and advice if they were to modify teaching techniques so that they would be more appropriate for adult students with reading and writing difficulties.

Two developments occurred. First, a working party was established to examine proposals for the development of teaching adult literacy. This working party was seen as representative, but acting independently of any particular literacy provider. It recommended that an Adult Literacy Information Office be established to act as a resource and referral centre for all literacy workers and students. This was established in 1979 and has provided invaluable support to many people working in the field. However, its effectiveness is, inevitably, dependent on how many choose to use it. Consequently, the Board of Adult Education initiated a second development. It sought and received a particular purpose grant from Commonwealth Education Funds for the employment of a Literacy Project Officer to:

i. survey the existing range and type of literacy provision funded by the Board and make recommendations for improvement;

ii. facilitate contact between the Adult Literacy Information Office and teachers working in Evening Colleges and community groups;

iii. introduce training and staff development activities;

iv. establish guidelines for Evening Colleges running Adult literacy classes; and

v. investigate and develop innovative schemes to deal with literacy provision for special populations.

A person was first appointed in 1983 and, as a consequence, many changes have occurred in the organisation and management of literacy classes and in the methods of teaching employed. All teachers are encouraged to develop individual programmes for students adopting a variety of techniques. Regular workshops and newsletters keep all teachers up to date about new developments in adult literacy teaching and about other staff development activities.

It is appropriate at this stage to describe the structure of this sector of the educational system in N.S.W. as it will help explain why the issue of support to Evening College teachers is hard to resolve.

The N.S.W. Ministry of Education is quite separate from the N.S.W. Department of Education, which has responsibility for schools, and the N.S.W. Department of TAFE, which has responsibility for Technical Colleges. The Ministry is small and the N.S.W. Board of Adult Education is one of eight authorities under its wing. The Board's staff is also small and, as the Board is responsible for funding and supporting 43 Evening Colleges, 43 Community Adult Education Centres and numerous smaller

adult education centres, the staff is not always able to provide the level of support that may be desirable in specialised areas such as adult literacy.

At the time of writing, there are 65 literacy teachers working in Evening Colleges as well as about 20 volunteer tutors in special community projects. Each of these teachers would have between five and ten students at any one time. Thus, the Board estimates there are about 500 students in literacy classes each week. The two or four hours a week that these teachers spend with these students may be the only hours they work with adult students.

The teachers are employed directly by Evening College principals, some of whom are more aware of the requirements of the job than others. To encourage these teachers to consider changing their teaching techniques and to attend weekend and evening workshops has been quite hard, but it was pleasing that in 1986, 50 teachers working in Evening Colleges attended at

least one half-day staff development activity. All these teachers also receive three newsletters a year and receive regular broadsheets from the Adult Literacy Information Office.

The needs for liaison, support and effective communication are increasingly being met. Principals are increasingly liaising with the Literacy Project Officer regarding the appointment of new teachers and this is a very positive step.

INPUTS

The extent of the literacy programme funded by the N.S.W. Board of Adult Education is determined by the amount of government funding available through state and federal sources each year. It is currently approximately $500,000 per annum.

As mentioned earlier, a Commonwealth-designated grant pays for the Literacy Project Officer and a small amount of Commonwealth funding is available to support innovative programmes. The state allocation is determined each year and has been fairly consistent for some years. This money pays for wages and resources in Evening Colleges and community centres. In addition, some of the funds designated for use with migrants, women and aboriginal people are also used for specific literacy programmes for these groups.

A breakdown of the characteristics of the students attending an inner-west, Sydney Evening College class during 1985 gives a representative picture of the type of students attending these classes. Of 22 students enrolled throughout the year, there were equal numbers of males and females, some eight were native born Australians, with another six born in Australia to non-English-speaking parents, and

eight migrants. An equal number were below and above the age of 30. The majority (20) were employed full-time or part-time.

All of the teachers are teacher-trained, the majority with specialist qualifications. The Literacy Project Officer has specialist qualifications. She regularly visits and advises teachers on site.

Unlike all other classes in Evening Colleges, except for those for the disabled, the Board funds literacy classes directly thus ensuring that no charge is made to the student.

This also allows a degree of control and enables the Literacy Project Officer to plan the overall pattern of provision for the State.

A number of strategies are adopted, which entail:

i. close liaison with Department of TAFE personnel to minimise duplication of provision and to provide appropriate responses to local needs;

ii. liaison with TAFE literacy teachers requesting their support of Evening College teachers if appropriate;

iii. encouragement of literacy liaison groups in regions to foster communications and co-operation between the various providers;

iv. regular monitoring of demand for classes through statistical returns;

v. a requirement of Evening College principals to inform the Literacy Project Officer of the qualifications and experience of all literacy teachers employed; and

vi. regular monitoring of the plans of Evening Colleges through a system called 'Project Funding', i.e., submissions for funds for specific programmes.

Funding decisions are made on the basis of need and the lack of existing provision. It has become possible to predict where there is likely to be a demand for classes and funds have been directed accordingly. Demand is growing.

Part of the Literacy Project Officer's role is to encourage the development of innovative programmes. A number of these have been established, but their effectiveness has not yet been evaluated. These projects have been established where a conventional classroom situation is not appropriate. These include: a literacy and numeracy drop-in centre at the YWCA in Sydney; literacy

drop-in centres at two youth centres in disadvantaged areas of Sydney; women-only numeracy classes; a group of Aboriginal women writers; adult literacy students visiting colleges to show other students how to publish their work themselves; integrated craft/literacy workshops for migrants; and the development of aboriginal materials for use with aboriginal students. The planning of these programmes is dependent on a number of factors such as perceived need, appropriate teachers, funding, demand and commitment.

Evening College principals are expected to plan their literacy programmes in accordance with guidelines established by the Board's Literacy Project Officer. These guidelines refer to such factors as the size of classes, composition of classes, the use of adult materials, the type of rooms, and responsibility to promote the programme and administer the funds.

Literacy teachers are expected to plan their programmes on an individual needs basis using adult interest materials. They are encouraged to provide a friendly atmosphere, moving furniture if necessary. Since most Evening Colleges operate from high schools, it is sometimes difficult to find an appropriate venue for adult literacy classes.

There are a number of mechanisms adopted to encourage student participation. These involve the use of local radio to publicise programmes and the devising of appealing names for the classes, making community workers aware of the classes, publicising the classes to other Evening College students, and publicising the classes along with the rest of the Evening College programme.

Within the class, teachers are encouraged to promote student participation through classroom discussion, tea and coffee facilities, and small group activities. Developing programmes in response to student needs is not interpreted as students working in isolation.

As indicated above, much effort has already been expended to improve literacy classes in Evening Colleges and community centres. Efforts to provide a variety of staff development activities and venues have resulted in increasing participation and improved classroom practice. Efforts to bring literacy teachers together, particularly in country areas, have also begun to work successfully. This remains a priority. Teachers are encouraged to assess the effectiveness of their own programmes. On the whole, student retention is high.

OUTCOMES

The organisation and structure of non-award adult education in N.S.W. is rapidly changing. The old model of Evening Colleges, running from one high school site with a part-time principal, is disappearing. The conventional literacy class by a high school remedial teacher was an historical development related to the beginnings of literacy provision. We are now looking to larger Evening

Colleges, with full-time principals able to explore alternative models of adult education including literacy provision within the community. Full-time principals will also be able to provide stronger support for their teachers in the form of negotiating for more appropriate classrooms, providing opportunities for social events, allocating resources for materials, publicising more effectively and providing a stronger college to identify with.

Along with the rationalisation of Evening Colleges, the N.S.W. Board of Adult Education has also recently set up Regional Councils of Adult Education with executive officers. There are a number of reasons for this, but included among them are factors such as gaining a more accurate assessment of needs, making better use of available resources, and responding more appropriately to the needs of rural communities. These major structural and administrative changes are bound to affect the literacy provision currently funded by the Board. Until such time as the impact of re-organisation has been assessed, it would be counter-productive for the Literacy Project Officer to introduce major changes.

In many ways literacy classes in Evening Colleges are an anomaly. The literature on the experiences and expectations of adult literacy students suggest that a school environment would be the last place an illiterate adult would want. We have tried through the means we have available to minimise the potential effect of a schoolroom atmosphere and have often considered not using school premises. The opinions of teachers and students have been canvassed on this issue and, unexpectedly, many students have NOT wanted an alternative venue. If is not a frightening, but a familiar, environment. It is where they expect to go to learn something. Teachers argue that literacy classes in Evening Colleges have a "special" atmosphere. Many of the students are in employment and the composition of classes reflect the composition of the community.

So we should heed these words, and not assume that commonly accepted or commonly understood "principles of adult education" accurately reflect the needs and aspirations of all students. Eight hours a week in an adult environment in a TAFE College or an Adult Education Community Centre may seem on paper to be the ideal learning environment. Other students remind us that we must continue to provide the maximum choices so that students can determine where they want to learn.

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POST GRADUATE REFRESHER COURSE FOR VETERINARIANS IN 'ORTHOPAEDICS - DOGS & CATS'

Dr. D. Bryden
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University of Sydney

PROCESS

This course, as one of many provided by the Foundation, involved 30 lecture sessions each of one-hour duration extending from Monday to Friday. These lectures were supplemented with audio-visual aids, overhead projection, Kodachrome projection and video projection. Four workshop sessions were conducted immediately after the lecture course. During these workshops, participating veterinarians were able to do practice operations on prepared bones using all the internal and external fixation procedures demonstrated and discussed during the week.

Program planning for this course began more than two years before the course was held. A need was felt within the profession for a particular area of veterinary medicine or surgery to be covered with a refresher course and a group was asked to draw up a draft program.

A leading overseas authority was then selected, giving consideration to his standing, his ability to write and speak well, and his capacity to hold the attention of an audience during the week-long refresher course. This speaker was then approached and invited to lead the course and the program was presented to him for final adjustment. Having selected 15-20 of the 30 lectures to be given, the visiting speaker was then supported by Australians skilled in that area of activity and a final program put to the Post Graduate Committee and the Senate of the University for their approval.

As each of the speakers tackles the task which they have agreed to undertake, subtle changes in the program occur to them which are discussed with the Director and changes made accordingly. Frequently additional speakers or writers are commissioned to fill gaps in the program which are noticed after the main preparatory work has been initiated.

Each individual veterinarian in Australia and many, many veterinarians overseas receive a mailing from us every two months. These contain writings which alert the profession to the proposed refresher courses to be held in the near future, and which encourage veterinarians to attend. Each veterinarian is busily engaged in the day-to-day problems of practice management and some motivation is needed to ensure that veterinarians make the commitment to leave their practice and their home for a week to come to Sydney, or wherever the course is being held, and spend a long week of post-graduate educational

involvement. All veterinarians who attend enjoy the week and the encouragement is needed only to overcome the inertia which develops from the pressing problems of practice.

OUTCOMES

The goal of each program conducted by the Post Graduate Committee is to cover as broadly and as deeply as possible a particular aspect of veterinary medicine or surgery in a course with 30 lectures and demonstrations, or at workshop sessions. The aim is to refresh the veterinarians's basic knowledge and to up-date his knowledge and skills by including wherever possible new developments which have occurred in that particular field. Our aim is also to provide the profession with published proceedings following each refresher course which will serve as an up-to-date reference text, fully indexed, so that it is readily accessible to the busy veterinarian in the field.

Over a period of time it is our aim to cover all aspects of veterinary medicine from topics as diverse as fish farming in rural Australia to orthopaedic surgery on the horse; from ophthalmology to computers and business management; from clinical pathology, gross pathology and toxicology to artificial breeding and embryo transfer in a range of species.

To some extent the benefit of programs to participants is gauged from comments made during the course and sometimes by the completion of questionnaires at the course. Feedback from participating veterinarians, usually unsolicited, is gathered during subsequent months.

INPUTS

The participants at a refresher course are largely veterinarians in practice, with smaller numbers of veterinarians from other fields such as teaching, research, industry, and government. Students also frequently participate in the refresher courses. At some refresher courses covering areas which overlap with other scientific workers, graduates and diplomates in other fields and other interested people may also be present.

The keynote speaker is always a world authority and is supported by a number of Australian speakers eminent in the particular field.Technical direction in the planning of the course is provided by a veterinarian close to the Committee who is skilled in that particular area. Co-ordination, planning and conduct of the course, including chairing of sessions and general organisation, is conducted by the Director and the Associate Director of the Post Graduate Committee, assisted by the staff of eight secretaries employed by the Committee.

Donations made to the Post Graduate Foundation by both non-veterinarians and by veterinarians are supplemented by earnings from the conduct of Post Graduate Refresher Courses and from the sale of proceedings to fund courses.

Facilities are usually provided on the University of Sydney campus, but sometimes courses are held in other venues. For instance, a course has been held at Glenfield Veterinary Research Station, at the University of New England, and at a number of other venues in towns and cities such as Tamworth, Ballina, Gunnedah, Shepparton, Melbourne, and Perth. Courses are planned in future for Richmond, Orange, and Albury. Some equipment is provided by the University of Sydney and other equipment and materials are supplied by the Post Graduate Committee.

EVALUATION

Refresher courses are planned and designed as the need is felt for them within the profession. Frequently, this will be stimulated by the length of time since a previous refresher course on that topic was held.

INFLUENCES

Technical developments within the veterinary profession frequently stimulate the programming of new courses. Emerging disease situations will sometimes have an influence on program development. Changing Government policies in relation to disease control could have a stimulatory effect on the development of some programs. On some occasions, brief courses of one or two days have been put on at short notice to make use of a visiting overseas authority.

Positive influences contributing to the effectiveness of programs are the enthusiasm of the veterinary profession generally, the co-operation of the Faculty of Veterinary Science at the University of Sydney, and the speedy and efficient work of staff of the Post Graduate Committee. Negative influences which hinder program development include the slow communications through Australia Post, with the frequent strikes which occur and disrupt transport in this country and the difficulty which some overseas speakers have in obtaining exemption from taxation in this country.

COMMENTS

It is difficult in such a short space to fully explain the detailed planning and conduct of our activities which involve the running of post graduate courses and workshops, the publication of Proceedings, Reviews, Vade Mecums and texts, and the interchange of information within the veterinary profession on a regular two monthly basis.

THE 'WELCARE' PROGRAMME OF THE CENTRE FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION MONASH UNIVERSITY

Dr. Jack McDonell,
Director, Centre for Continuing Education

INTRODUCTION

This programme is designed to bring together professionals working in the field of welfare and health care - typically, welfare workers, doctors, nurses, lawyers, school teachers, police officers, community health workers, etc. - to discuss current issues in which they have mutual interests. The programme is deliberately issues-based and cross-disciplinary, in contrast to most programmes in continuing professional education which are concerned with skills-development for members of a single profession.

PROCESS

The dominant method of teaching and learning is through face-to-face contact between participants and contributors. For this mix of professions, whose members tend to work under considerable stress from both their organisations and their clients, it is difficult to attract significant numbers of participants to come together for periods in excess of one day. Hence this programme consists, in the main, of seminars which either extend over a single working day or which run from 4.00 p.m. to 10.00 p.m. In either case, interaction among participants during a meal is seen as a significant contribution to the learning process. For each seminar, a number of contributors (usually, about six) is recruited from a range of relevant professions.

The initiation of each activity in this programme relies on the expertise of a single programme co-ordinator who has developed a widespread network of contacts in the range of professions concerned. This co-ordinator's perception, that a particular subject or issue may be topical and provide the basis for a seminar, is tested by the process of consultation with relevant professionals in a large network of contacts. In other words, needs analysis is undertaken by assessing the reactions of selected practitioners (members of the target audience) from a variety of different welfare and health care agencies and government departments.

If the reactions from these preliminary consultations are favourable, the next step is to recruit a group of the same people as a planning committee. The approach (somewhat over-simplified) is, "You agreed that this is a good idea; would you now help us plan an activity around it?" A series of meetings of this committee is then organised, to advise the co-ordinator on programme details - in particular, on

the "politics" of the various viewpoints which should be represented and on the persons who should be invited to be contributors.

Programme improvement is seldom a main issue in this field. Since each activity is directed towards a topical issue, the opportunities for its repetition are limited. Nevertheless, there is value in evaluating the process and the quality of the inputs on each occasion; there may be an opportunity for a repeat, or the same speakers may be under consideration as contributors to future activities. Two processes of evaluation are generally used. One is a simple questionnaire which the participants are invited (voluntarily) to complete and leave at the end of the activity. The other is the contacting of a random sample of participants, by telephone, within a few days of the event. Often, both methods are used to give complementary information.

Encouraging participation is largely seen as a marketing process. Given the nature of the planning process and the reputation which this programme has established over a number of years, it is a rarity for any difficulty in attracting a significant number of participants to be experienced. Attendances at each seminar are usually in the range 60 to 150, with the limitation being either that imposed by the capacity of the venue or that imposed by the format recommended by the planning committee. Each activity is promoted principally through a direct mailing list of about 1,200 addresses, built up over a period of years and regularly reviewed.

OUTCOMES

The main programme goal is regularly described, both explicitly and implicitly, as the promotion of interaction between members of a range of professions, in the interests of cross-fertilisation of ideas and helping participants to extend their own personal networks of contacts. Naturally, the aim of extending each individual's knowledge base is always present.

The ultimate objective is to assist, even if only in small ways, improving the quality of health and welfare services to the community. There is no likelihood of a university being effective through targetting an adult education programme to the vast number of individual adults who use such services. What we can do is to provide support and back-up, through a programme such as this, for those professionals and community workers who are, in any case, the obvious first contacts for people needing assistance of these kinds.

Because of the nature of these objectives, direct evidence of programme benefits is seldom obvious. Strong indirect evidence of benefit, however, comes from the continuous high level of support for the programme. Its reputation is such that almost every advertised activity fills rapidly.

INPUTS

Participants come from a wide range of professional fields - medicine, law, social work, education, police, etc. There is also a high level of attendance from various community centres. Speakers and discussion leaders are recruited on the advice of planning committees. By and large, they recommend experienced practitioners in the fields concerned. University staff members are very much in the minority among these contributors.

The salary of the programme co-ordinator responsible for this programme is met from the Centre's budget allocation for the University. All other costs are met by the Centre from its earnings. Such costs include those of secretarial and clerical support staff as well as the direct costs of the activities themselves. The "market" in this field will not support a fee level high enough to meet all these costs; therefore the Centre, in effect, subsidises this programme from its earnings from other activities. Facilities and equipment used are, in general, those of the University and the charges for these are part of the direct costs of the programme.

EVALUATION

The programme evolved a few years after the establishment of this Centre which, in its early years, was taking up suggestions from a wide range of quarters as to the fields in which it could most usefully operate. It became clear that this was a field in which there was a strong need for someone to provide a kind of "neutral territory" in which people from different professions and agencies could interact. A university, which has no vested interest in the outcomes of these, sometimes contentious, issues, can provide such a forum. Hence, it was decided to concentrate on a programme of this kind. There has been no hindrance to the evolution of the programme as such. There are often difficulties in the design of individual activities, particularly in issues where some agencies or professions have strong "territorial" interests, but these do not affect the viability of the overall programme.

INFLUENCES

Positive influences towards programme success are the skill and personality of the programme co-ordinator and the goodwill towards the programme which exists, particularly in her network of contacts.

Negative influences include the following:

There are difficulties, sometimes, in securing suitable venues in the University well in advance - academic requirements sometimes have priority. There is a similar problem, on occasions, of access to University services.

More serious is the financial problem of "fee under- cutting" by other agencies which are entering the same market. Many of these do not run extensive programmes but will offer, occasionally, a

single activity on a topic related to one in our programme. They are often funded in such a way as to be able to absorb a much higher proportion of costs and hence to charge lower fees.

This problem is compounded by the state of the national economy in which government expenditures are being decreased. Agencies in the health and welfare fields are not getting the finance they need to meet increasing demands on their services. As a result, budget allocations for training are, in some cases, being significantly reduced.

A COUNTRY PAEDIATRIC PROGRAMME

Dr. Hank Duyverman
South Australian Postgraduate Medical Education Association Inc.

INTRODUCTION

The Country Paediatric Programme (CPP) was a joint venture involving the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP), the Adelaide Children's Hospital (ACH,) and the South Australian Postgraduate Medical Education Association (SAPMEA). The task of mounting and co-ordinating the programme devolved on SAPMEA. There were three programmes in the series during 1986, each held at major country centres within the Murray Riverland, some 200 km. from the capital, Adelaide. The First CPP was held at Loxton on July 19-20, the second at Berri on October 18-19 and the third at Renmark on November 29-30.

PROCESS

Teaching methods were principally didactic. Opportunities existed throughout the programme sessions for discussion, but these had a more formal structure. Informal discussion among peers, speakers and chairmen occurred generally at the dinner on the evening of the first day. The speakers, who were all reasonably well-known by the participants, were freely available throughout the evening.

Teaching materials consisted of photocopied notes, overhead transparencies, 35 mm. slides and on a few occasions a video presentation was made.

Programme planning was undertaken by a joint committee consisting of staff from the RACGP, the ACH and SAPMEA. The initial planning was undertaken in late 1985. The Medical Director of SAPMEA circulated to all medical practitioners in the area a questionnaire, the answers to which were to provide among other things:

i. the style of meeting respondents wished;

ii. their educational needs in order of priority from within the known divisions of paediatric medicine and surgery;

iii. the number of meetings over which the programme could be sustained in the area;

iv. the locations for the meetings; and

v. the extent of administrative assistance that could be offered by local individuals or the local Medical Association.

The questionnaires were analysed at a joint committee meeting. Needs assessment was made the easier, by having respondents list the desired content of the planned programme in order of priority. It was the committee's task to match those needs with the availability of teaching staff and within budget constraints. A draft programme was circulated to the practitioners in the area.

Improvements (rather - refinements) were made to the programme by the return of information through the Secretary of the local Medical Association. The refinements proved to be wholly cosmetic in nature and there was no need to consult further with the potential presenters at the ACH. A final printed programme was produced covering most of the aspects requested. This programme was circulated not only to the targetted practitioners within the defined area, but also practitioners in adjacent areas interstate (e.g., Mildura and Wentworth).

The only encouragement for participation was directed externally to the programme, i.e. the local secretary, per telephone, probably badgered each practitioner to attend. Our "man-on-the-scene" was vital to the success of the programme. His encouragement secured 23 of the 24 practitioners in the area to attend each of the three programmes (the 24th was on rotational emergency standby and could not attend). A further four were enticed to come from interstate. Participation within the programme was assumed and no direct efforts were made.

OUTCOMES

The broad programme goal was to provide a suitable continuing educational programme for general practitioners in a country area of South Australia. With the assistance of the ACH, the RACGP and the local Medical Association, course objectives were developed from the results of the questionnaire. These were to provide within the division of paediatric medicine:

i. clinical understanding in general areas;

ii. information on recent advances in general areas;

iii. overviews in specific areas;

iv. diagnosis and management in specific areas; and

v. case presentation.

The process of obtaining agreements on the objectives was through the questionnaire and the follow-up refinement of the programme through the local Secretary. The content was also established through the questionnaire.

Evidence of actual programme benefits to the learners is extremely difficult to obtain. No objective measure was undertaken to evaluate the learning and the level of retention with time. Other than supervision in a clinical framework of the medical practices of the learner, no other direct measure is possible. At the time of the three programmes, presenters gained the general impression that each of the programmes was of significant benefit to learners. This was further expressed by many of the learners themselves, in writing, at the end of each of the programmes, or at the end of the series. Specific comment was made by more than half of the participants, that a concentrated programme as devised and delivered could not readily be obtained in the capital city at any of the teaching hospitals and, more significantly, very few could attend such programmes there, because of the difficulty of obtaining locum services and the high cost of travel and accommodation.

INPUTS

All participants were general practitioners holding the degrees MB, BS. About one-third had additional qualifications in obstetrics and gynaecology. None of the participants had practised for less than three years. To become a participant in the programme, each practitioner was invited to enrol and pay a fee of $40. The fact that 23 of the 24 practitioners from the area enrolled is highly significant (100% enrolment was not possible, as one member was on emergency roster).

Enrolment and acceptance of fees (plus additional add-ons for lunches, dinners, etc.,) were handled by SAPMEA's office in Adelaide.

A team of three lecturers (medical specialists) from the ACH were used for each of the three programmes. In addition, an RACGP co-ordinator (attached to the ACH) was also in attendance. Sessional chairmen were drawn from the three specialists, the co-ordinator and from the local Association. In addition to the teaching and facilitating personnel, SAPMEA's Medical Director and Executive Director (and five administrative staff within SAPMEA) played a role. The Medical Director provided the link between the local Association and the joint committee; the Executive Director was responsible for the implementation and execution of the programme and, together with his staff, provided the necessary administrative, managerial and financial framework.

Direct funding was obtained from the RACGP Foundation, to which budgets were submitted. Additional funds were obtained from the participants, each paying a $40 enrolment fee (speakers and chairmen were exempt). No speakers were paid a professional fee, nor offered an honorarium. The total amount obtained permitted SAPMEA to meet travelling, accommodation, catering, printing,

postage, and copying costs, venue hire expenses, and administrative overheads. SAPMEA donated the salary component of its staff involvement. Similarly, the ACH staff provided their time as support in kind. The simple financial breakdown was:

RACGP Foundation	$1500
Enrolment Fees	$1080
SAPMEA support in kind	$ 730
ACH support in kind	$1600
TOTAL	**$4910**

For each of the programmes, the most suitable venue was one where catering by way of lunches, morning and afternoon teas and dinners could be provided, and one which had a meeting facility suitable for the programme. In each case, a club or hotel/motel was chosen by the local association - its members being 15 10 au fait14 10 with the local scene and local conditions. On each of the three occasions, because food and beverage were included in the programme, venue costs were kept to a minimum. For those practitioners not wishing to drive home following the first day of the two-day programme, accommodation was organised by SAPMEA, the costs for which were borne directly by the participants. About one-third availed themselves of this facility.

Equipment needs for the three programmes were quite minimal. Where 35 mm. projectors and screens were available at the venue, they were used, as was video equipment. Overhead projectors were supplied by the ACH. When local equipment was not available, the ACH provided it from its audio-visual department.

EVALUATION

In previous years SAPMEA had mounted, from its own resources, a programme for country practitioners. This programme ran once a year for about two days (beginning on a Friday afternoon and concluding on Sunday afternoon). This was a costly exercise, and lacked the criterion of being "repeatable" in other country locations. This was because speakers were generally drawn from various specialist fields, but not particularly from teaching hospitals, nor was general support from the hospitals elicited. At the same time, the RACGP was also mounting programmes, perhaps somewhat less ambitiously. However, many of these were directed to capital city practitioners. Similarly, hospital refresher weeks conducted at the five teaching hospitals by SAPMEA also catered principally for the city practitioner, although about one-third of enrolments for these courses came from country areas.

During 1985, the RACGP and SAPMEA embarked on a programme of co-operation. The Medical and Executive Directors of SAPMEA became members of the RACGP Medical Education Committee and subsequently the RACGP Rural Health Committee. Through a fortuitous mix of individuals on that

committee (which included an ACH representative), programme development was assured. During 1985 and particularly 1986, SAPMEA became further and further involved in administering programmes for the RACGP. SAPMEA, as well as being a postgraduate and medical education body is also a professional conference organiser and as a PCO administered the RACGP's 29th Annual General Meeting and a six- day scientific programme. This professional liaison and trust set the stage at the Rural Health Committee meeting, for SAPMEA to be integrally involved in subsequent programmes.

The presence of an ACH representative, and the subsequent knowledge of an educational group need in the area of paediatrics, prompted the development of the Country Paediatric Programme involving as it did the ACH, the RACGP and SAPMEA. I am sure that, had there not been the "right" mix of committee members, this programme would not have been mounted the way it was, nor developed so quickly with the co-operation of the local association.

The success of the 1986 programme, paved the way for a similar programme to be conducted in the South East area of South Australia, involving the towns of Mt. Gambier, Naracoorte and Millicent, an area supporting a larger number of medical practitioners. Already, plans are being developed for 1988 in a third area of South Australia.

INFLUENCES

SAPMEA, since its inception in 1975, has had the responsibility of co-ordinating continuing medical education in South Australia. SAPMEA's principal supporters are the Australian Medical Association (South Australian Branch), the two Universities through their medical schools and the South Australian Health Commission. As confidence grew in SAPMEA as a co-ordinator and as it developed as the prime body mounting international, national and local medical conferences, seminars and workshops, its liaison with the teaching hospitals, pharmaceutical industry, government and the medical profession expanded dramatically, particularly in the last two years. This trend has enabled SAPMEA to obtain a far greater share of funds available for programming and to be a significant force within the profession in shaping its continuing education and quality assurance programmes.

I can state the fact (rather immodestly perhaps) that if a programme has "Organised by SAPMEA", "Sponsored by SAPMEA" or "Administered by SAPMEA" on it, it is well accepted by the profession and related industries as a significant medical learning event. Specialist bodies (now both medical and non-medical) seek out SAPMEA to conduct programmes on their behalf. This has led to a large increase in funds (derived as fee-for-service from these bodies), which SAPMEA can now use to augment its own educational initiatives.

A significant plus, too, is the apparent inexhaustible supply of willing speakers. As indicated, these are drawn from the specialist divisions of surgery and medicine. As advertising by the medical

profession is not permitted, the next best thing (as I believe is the current underlying reason for the plethora of specialist speakers) is for them to have a "visible" front in such programmes and thereby possibly increase the number of referrals derived from general practice. I will hasten to add, that there are many who are not motivated by reward, but rather have a commitment to the profession and the processes of continuing medical education.

Within South Australia, there exists eight county medical associations and a similar number of city associations. The boundaries of these associations were drawn up by the Australian Medical Association (South Australian Branch). Since drawing up these boundaries (quite arbitrarily it seems), there has been a significant increase in the development of large practices, particularly in the country associations, employing eight or more general practitioners. A number of associations are now dominated by these large practices - a process which has not admitted to good communication with SAPMEA, nor the easy development of programmes for the benefit of the whole of the medical community in that geographic area.

To have a person at the scene who is committed to the aims of the programme is fundamental to the success of such country initiatives. Regrettably, SAPMEA has no part in the selection process of its representative from the local association, and it can be saddled with a lack-lustre individual who may not have strong commitments to continuing education, nor the time from his/her practice to devote in promoting these kinds of programmes among colleagues within the area. In every case, where a programme has been educationally successful and the attendance acceptable, it has been due in no small part to the motivation of the "person-at-the-scene".

SAPMEA obtains the largest portion of its income from the management of conferences. The number of these may fluctuate from year to year as does the relative financial success of each. It is therefore difficult to reflect adequately the potential income from these and hence provide for an ongoing country programme, without sourcing of funds from such bodies as the RACGP Foundation. The fact that these external sources are also liable to fluctuation, or in time may totally dry up, makes the planning of ongoing programmes very difficult. Fortunately, the country paediatric programme which is the basis of this paper is only one of 62 programmes SAPMEA is conducting in South Australia.

OTHER

Apart from the Royal Australian College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, no continuing accreditation programme exists among the medical profession. Practitioners, following their internship (one year post basic), are registered with the Medical Board and may practise for life. There is no compulsory quality assurance or peer review programme to establish a medical practitioner's current competencies, whether it be educational or procedural. This lack of compulsory educational audit has been questioned of late by a number of bodies and the Federal Government's Inquiry into Medical

Education and the Medical Workforce (now current) will, I am sure, receive a number of submissions questioning the ad hoc arrangements across Australia for continuing medical education. Compulsory audit will be a feature of such submissions, although details will be necessarily vague.

Currently, it seems, that country practitioners are happy with their own personal audit in SAPMEA's joint education

PREPARATORY STUDIES AT THE DARLING DOWNS INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED EDUCATION

Michael Crock and Caroline Cottman

INTRODUCTION

Preparatory Studies is a currently operating external programme which aims to ensure that students who complete it successfully will have attained the skills in communications and mathematics necessary to undertake confidently most tertiary level courses. In addition, successful students will have demonstrated that they have mastered those study techniques and habits required by tertiary students. It is particularly useful in providing a bridge for mature-age students who have been away from study for a period of time and who are not confident of their ability to undertake a tertiary course.

PROCESS

The Preparatory Studies programme uses the distance education method for the operation of its course components. Materials, which are primarily print based, include study books, assigned texts, audio-cassette tapes, and computer-managed learning packages. Although the teaching year at Darling Downs is divided into three periods, students may enrol in Preparatory Studies at any time. However, the final examination for the course components is held only three times per year in June, November, and February. Students may study at their own set pace. However, a student who wishes to study at about the same rate which is expected of people enrolled part-time in accredited courses such as the Bachelor of Business or the Associate Diploma in Engineering should complete the course in approximately eighteen weeks. Given that the final examination is held only three times per year, it may not be possible for this timetable to be exactly adhered to. The distance education method incorporates telephone counselling and extended assignment feedback as student support measures. Additionally, each student is assigned a tutor for each course component who can be contacted for individualized attention.

The programme is at present being used as an entry standard for certain tertiary courses in Australia and is comprised of three course components:

i. Practising Academic Skills Successfully (PASS),
ii. Communications Skills Update, and
iii. Updating Mathematical Skills.

The study skills section of the course (PASS) is studied first and is about one-quarter of the work load. The mathematics and communications sections are of approximately equal size, they are studied simultaneously, and constitute the remaining three-quarters of the work load. Thus, the student who

wishes to complete the course in about eighteen weeks will spend the first four weeks on study skills and the remaining fourteen weeks on mathematics and communications. Preparatory Studies will soon be expanded to incorporate additional modules to cover preparatory skills in physics, educational studies and chemistry where required. Each of the course components of the Preparatory Studies programme has been developed and is monitored by members in a unit team which includes subject specialists, instructional designers and tertiary course administrators.

Students are given the opportunity to complete written questionnaires evaluating each component of the Preparatory Studies programme. The appropriate course development team then has the task of recommending programme improvement based upon students' perceptions plus the team's evaluation of the students' standards of achievement. Subsequent improvements are then incorporated into the material where considered appropriate by the leader of the course development team.

Telephone Tutorial at D.D.I.A.E.

Participation in each of the course components is encouraged by the inherent structure of Preparatory Studies. The emphasis in the programme is to instill confidence and a genuine sense of

accomplishment as the students work their way through course components. The main objective of most assessment items is to ensure that the student has achieved the appropriate level of understanding, in essence a pass/unacceptable marking scheme of assignments. There is, therefore, a great effort made by the course tutors to provide explicit written and/or verbal feedback and encourage resubmissions rather than assigning additional workloads to allow the students to illustrate they have upgraded their skills. Participation is also promoted by a variety of activities. For instance, in PASS, students are required to make regular telephone contact with their assigned tutor and in Updating Mathematical Skills there is a weekly telephone trouble line where students can talk with tutors directly at a guaranteed time.

OUTCOMES

As commented upon above, the major objectives of the programme are that on successful completion of the course components students will have acquired the mathematical and communication skills necessary to undertake most tertiary courses and be familiar with the study techniques required by tertiary students.

Implicit within both of the major objectives is the additional goal of promoting confidence and a true sense of self-accomplishment within individuals as they progress through the programme.

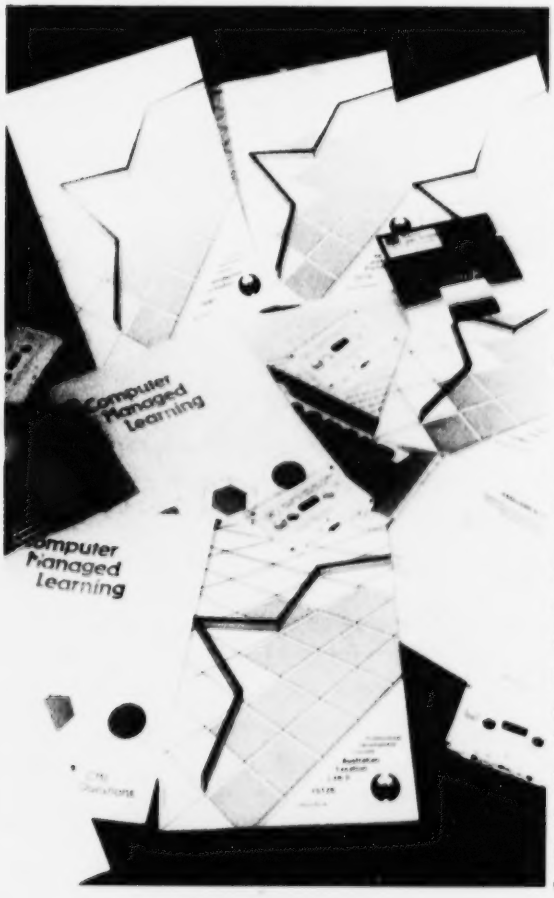
Evaluation forms submitted by students have been strongly in support of the Preparatory Studies programme with respect to its format and perceived applicability. The continual increase in enrolments is another indication of the programme's success, with enrolments in the latest academic year approaching 300 students. Of the first group of students to complete the programme and enter into a tertiary degree course, over 87 percent have passed all subjects attempted to date.

INPUTS

As previously stated, the Preparatory Studies programme had close to 300 enrolled students in the 1986 academic year. The vast majority of these students were mature-age students who were interested in returning to tertiary studies after a significant number of years since last attempting studies of any description. Most were interested in attempting external studies while maintaining their current job position. While most students lived in Queensland, there were also interstate and international students registered in the programme.

Academic staff members to date include six course authors, 12 tutors in the PASS course, four tutors in the Communication Skills Update, and three tutors in the Updating Mathematical Skills course. The programme also utilizes Continuing Education administrative staff and DDIAE administrative services such as mailing, student enrolments, student support centre, and advertising.

For the current academic year the entire Preparatory Studies programme can be attempted for a fee of $110. The individual course components can be attempted as continuing education courses for the following amounts: PASS $30, Communications Skills Update $45, and Updating Mathematical Skills $35. The prices include all the materials required and tutorial support for students. Payments for course tutors and the production of material are financed from the fees collected. The administrative costs of the programme are not directly calculated as this programme is administered along with all other continuing education courses. However, the course fee structure has been set at a level such that the programme's projected costs are recovered.



Resource Materials for Distance Education Programs

The programme requires the use of the assignment system, computer-managed learning system, and student support systems of the DDIAE. Inherent in the use of all three of these systems is the use of computer facilities, telephone and teletutorial facilities and mailing facilities. There are no direct costs associated with the use of these facilities, with the exception of telephone charges for teletutorials.

EVALUATION

The first complete evaluation of the Preparatory Studies program is currently in preparation. It is anticipated that the report will confirm that the programme has satisfied the initial goal of providing an appropriate academic avenue for those who wish to return to tertiary studies after a substantial period away from formal studies. The subsequent expansion of the scope of the Preparatory Studies programme to incorporate subject areas such as chemistry, physics and educational studies appears to be in response to a need for the upgrading of entry level knowledge for a wider range of tertiary courses. The developmental time required to produce additional course

components appears to be the major obstacle to the programme's expansion.

INFLUENCES

The growing interest by various sectors in government and education in making tertiary studies more accessible to mature- age students or to those individuals who have not been able to gain entry to tertiary studies through the normal channels has been a positive factor in establishing the Preparatory Studies programme. The positive response the programme is currently receiving from participants will ensure that its continued development will proceed in the near future. However, the requirement that the programme must attempt to break even on costs is a negative influence in that the fee structure may prohibit some individuals from participating.

FINAL COMMENTS

The Preparatory Studies programme aims at reducing the stress and anxiety of returning to study by providing external studies material which the students can work through at their individual pace, while being provided with the appropriate degree of structure and support. Its continued use as an alternate avenue for entry into tertiary studies provides a valuable pathway for those individuals who may have previously felt unable to attempt to gain a tertiary qualification.

REFRESHER EDUCATION FOR COMPANY DIRECTORS

John Brady,

Department of Continuing Education,
University of New England.

INTRODUCTION

The Company Directors' Association of Australia was founded in Sydney in 1967 and now has approximately 2700 members of whom about two-thirds are chairpersons, managing directors or chief executives; most of the remainder are other executive directors.

A course for company directors was launched in the late seventies and in the early eighties and the University of New England became involved. The University through the Department of Continuing Education is now in control of the curriculum and of the standards to be achieved by the participants in the course.

PROCESS

The course consists of a series of 26 study guides each with a questionnaire attached. It is taught in three modes - correspondence, syndicate or residential. The correspondence course lasts over a maximum of two years and a participant may commence at any time in the year. A participant enrols and is immediately sent the first four study guides; as soon as he or she has completed the first guide the questionnaire is completed and returned to the University for marking. The marked questionnaire is then returned to the participant together with the next set of study guides. The procedure continues until all 26 study guides have been successfully completed. The participant is then entitled to a "Certificate of Completion" or if they wish they may sit an examination successful completion of which will result in the award of a "Company Director's Diploma".

The course can also be taken using the syndicate method which is a series of evening lectures usually of three-hours duration combined with home study. The third method is the totally residential course held over ten days at the University of New England.

It was recognised at an early stage that company directors needed to be sufficiently knowledgeable of various aspects of company law, commercial law, the role of Directors, corporation planning, industrial relations and accounting at a sufficiently high level to give the Director competence in the boardroom. The course attempts to answer these requirements by covering these topics in the Study

Guides. Each of the Study Guides has been written by an authority in that particular field. These authors have been drawn from the academic, professional and practical work areas.

There has been constant evaluation of the guides since the inception of the course. The very nature of the majority of the topics makes obsolescence a constant concern. Many of the Study Guides are involved with parliamentary decisions and legislation and must therefore be constantly updated. In addition each syndicate and residential course is evaluated and changes, when they are considered to be of value, are quickly incorporated into the Study Guides or teaching methods.

Authors are advised of necessary changes and asked to bring Guides up-to-date. They are also advised of any flaws or ambiguities in their writings. Teaching staff are evaluated by the participants and are later advised of the results. Occasionally teaching staff are considered inadequate and are changed; at other times they are counselled so that their presentation methods can be improved to take into account the different needs for this type (company directors) of group.

Regular advertisements are placed in the national media usually on two consecutive Wednesdays. The enquiry rate from these advertisements averages 200 giving an annual response in the vicinity of 2000. Respondents are then sent a package of information about the course including enrolment forms. In addition to this, the Company Directors Association has, in each state, an individual whose responsibility it is to follow up initial enquiries usually with a telephone call. All enquiries are entered on a master list and sorted into states for follow-up on non- enrolees.

The other principal means of encouraging participation is by regular articles in the various publications of the Association and by encouragement within the state chapters of the Company Directors' Association.

OUTCOMES

As mentioned above there is a variety of areas in which company directors need to be able to show competence. It is impracticable and unprofessional to rely on advisers at all times; indeed many directors claim to have suffered personal damage by relying on the advice of others. There is also the difficulty that not knowing one's job means not knowing when and with whom to consult. The aim of the course is to overcome these potential shortcomings and to give the director confidence to act efficiently and prudently on behalf of a company and with personal safety to oneself. It is not the aim to make the director expert in the field of accounting, commercial law or other such areas but to give the director sufficient competence to enable him or her to know when to turn for professional advice and to be able to make a rational judgement on that advice.

The course is also aimed at professionals such as auditors, lawyers and merchant bankers to enhance the quality of advice they give to their clients. In addition the course sets out to offer an excellent qualification for younger men and women joining companies at these executive levels.

Evaluation at the end of all the residential and syndicate courses, apart from suggesting minor improvements, brings a constant flow of positive responses. Many participants in the course have remarked on the benefits they had received often expressing regret that they had not attempted the course earlier. This last comment has been especially applicable to those who have their own businesses. There is a high degree of satisfaction evident among those who complete the correspondence course and many new individual enrolments are a result of learning about the course from satisfied past participants. The general impression given is of a high degree of satisfaction both with the content of the course and the way it is conducted. There is also a general appreciation of the benefits that are received by the learners which is highlighted by increasing enrolments and the relatively few changes (apart from annual updating) that need to be made.

INPUTS

The course is conducted by the University in association with the Company Directors' Association and one of the requirements is that all members of the course join the Association. However, in order to open the course to a wider audience it is possible for a person who does not satisfy the membership requirements for ordinary or fellow grade membership to be admitted as an affiliate member.

Participants are drawn from Australia and overseas. In 1986 enrolments were received from Hong Kong, Indonesia, the United Kingdom, and Singapore although these were usually, but not in every case, expatriate Australians. The enrolments from Australia in 1986 could be broken down as follows: N.S.W. 51%, W.A. 23%, Qld. 13%, Vic 11%, the remainder 2%. It is anticipated that the proportion covered by Victoria and South Australia will be considerably increased in the next few years.

The original 26 study guides were written by various authors, acknowledged authorities in their field. Since that time various re-writes and updates have taken place and in some cases topics have been dropped and others substituted. These changes have often required new authors. In the correspondence course students are required to return a completed questionnaire which is included at the end of each Study Guide. This questionnaire is marked by a part-time academic who is employed specifically to mark the questionnaires and is paid an hourly rate from the income derived from course participants.

The syndicate and residential courses both involve face-to-face teaching and wherever possible the authors of the Study Guides have been employed to lecture on their own topics. However, this is not always possible and particularly in states other than New South Wales alternative lecturers must be

found. These are usually drawn from academic institutions or the appropriate profession and are paid from fees charged to the participants.

The Company Directors Course is totally self-financing, all expenses are covered by fees. The course is relatively expensive as there are quite high costs associated with regular advertising in the national press and capital city newspapers. Payments are made to authors of Study Guides and the part-time academics who mark the questionnaires and the examination papers. Each year payments to authors for updating and to lecturers of the syndicate and residential courses total in excess of $7,500. There is also the cost of stationery, telephone calls, travel and the hard- cover binders which contain the study guides. Other costs cover general administration and casual assistance.

The correspondence course is the least expensive mode of study as there are no lecture costs while the syndicate course not only has to cover lecturers' costs but also the hire of venues in the various cities in which it is held. The residential course which is only conducted at the University of New England is the most expensive as in this case the cost of food and accommodation has to be included.

All the equipment for the correspondence course is paid for from fees. This includes administrative support by the University, the production of high quality binders and the printing of the Study Guides.

The Syndicate courses operate under slightly different circumstances in each location but typically include a venue with the usual audio-visual facilities and a well-appointed lecture theatre. The residential course at the University of New England makes use of University lecture facilities and one of the residential colleges for accommodation and meals. All the courses are administered by the Department of Continuing Education.

EVALUATION

Typically a one hour session is set aside at the end of residential courses to examine the written evaluation sheets which have been completed on a daily basis. This session not only covers the written information but also elicits many verbal comments all of which are used not only to improve the lectures but also the quality of the Study Guides.

Evaluation of the syndicate course follows a similar pattern with students being requested to complete an evaluation sheet at the end of each evening covering points such as the lecturer's presentation, subject knowledge and value to the individual. In addition participants are asked to comment on the Study Guide. On the final evening a verbal evaluation session takes place with additional information elicited on the lecture facilities and administration.

The correspondence course is not formally evaluated except in so far as participants are encouraged to write a report at the end of their course.

INFLUENCES

It is now generally accepted in the majority of professions that refresher education is essential to counteract the rapid rate of obsolescence. The area of knowledge needed to be covered by company directors is vast so that no individual can hope to be expert in all areas. Company directors must therefore have some competence in these fields and be able to know when and with whom to consult for further information. The Company Directors' Association of Australia recognised these problems and in association with the University of New England initiated the course to help to overcome these difficulties. It is this attitude of the Association which has been a most positive influence in the success of the course. The Association publishes and circulates regular articles to its members constantly warning them of the dangers of professional obsolescence and exhorting them to consider enrolling in the course.

Additionally in each state the Association has a Membership Development Officer who, as a part of his/her duties, is entrusted with the task of following up enquiries. The normal procedure is that promotional material is sent to all persons who make an enquiry. If, at a later stage, there has been no further contact the Membership Development Officer telephones enquirers and attempts to persuade them to join the association and take the course. This method of course recruitment has proved to be very successful.

The principal problem facing the correspondence course is the need to rely on the normal postal service for regular communication concerning the Study Guides and the Questionnaires. This has, at times, resulted in considerable delays in servicing the participants but is an inevitable consequence of the course mode. Another problem is the on-going necessity to up-date the Study Guides. Subjects that are covered are topical and constantly being changed by legislation. This necessitates authors being available for re-writing which, in turn, requires the up-dated Guides being reprinted and advice sent to past and present students about the new editions. Those students who respond are then mailed the new guides.

OTHER

The programme now appears to be well established and is quite obviously filling a need amongst company directors and people in similar managerial positions. During the last few years there has been a rapid growth in enrolments together with increased awareness of the Course. There appears to be no reason for any diminution in this trend.

INCREASING CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Bob Holderness-Roddam
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Adult Education Section, South Hobart.

INTRODUCTION

The Local Government Education Association of Tasmania (LoGEAT) was formed in 1980. Its principle aim has been to increase public awareness of the role of local government and to encourage greater participation in local government. Specific objectives have been to: increase the number of citizens enrolled as electors, the number of electors actually voting, and the number of candidates seeking election; improve citizens' effectiveness in dealing with their local councils; and improve candidates' and potential candidates' ability to conduct an effective election campaign.

PROCESS

The two main teaching and learning methods used have been public media campaigns and workshops conducted in association with the Adult Education section of TAFE of the Education Department of Tasmania. The public media campaigns are used to encourage people to register as electors, turn out to vote, and to nominate for election.

There are generally two workshops offered in a variety of locations, usually just before the annual council elections each March. These are 'Dealing with Your Council' and 'Win an Election'. Both workshops have employed a minimum of lecture style instructions. We prefer to use discussions, based upon participants' experiences, and some role play.

At its inception, there was no formal needs assessment conducted. The author, who is an Adult Education principal and founder of the Local Government Education Association, considered there was a need for such workshops. This resulted from his experience as a local government elected member. Many individuals and groups were considered as not effective in their approaches to his council and many candidates did not mount effective election campaigns.

Workshop leaders for both subject areas have been all elected members or former elected members. They are familiar with the subject area - although a difference of opinion during workshops has been encouraged in order to show participants that there is no single correct way to conduct most activities.

Leaders note participants' reactions and comments during workshops and members are asked to complete an evaluation sheet at the end of each workshop.

The local media has been used extensively for campaigns to encourage participation as electors and candidates. Methods used include community service spots on radio, news releases advising of nomination dates and information and interviews on radio and television. The media have also been used to publicise the workshops. We place leaflets and posters in council offices, libraries and Adult Education centres.

OUTCOMES

A good example of the work of LoGEAT was the Local Government week media compaign conducted in 1982. The purpose of this particular campaign was to encourage people to enrol as electors for council elections. This was seen as the first critical step towards voting and being a candidate. The only way to assess the success of this campaign would have been to have asked each of the (then) 49 councils for the number of people added to their electoral roles during the period of the campaign - and for the corresponding period of the previous year! Time and money did not allow for this. Instead we monitored the media. Total radio and TV time was about one hour and twenty minutes. Newspapers, including regional weeklies, gave us 338 column centimetres of space or the equivalent of just over five, full-length columns in a broadsheet newspaper.

A public display was held in June 1982 to encourage voter turn-out at the Hobart City Council elections. This was held in the city's Centrepoint shopping centre. The venue was selected because of the number of people passing through the complex. The media was again very co-operative. The local commercial television station used the display as visual 'fill' during a five minute interview with the Town Clerk. The Hobart Mercury incorporated the material in a feature about the candidates and their policies.

The election turn-out increased by 11.3 percent compared to the previous election. However, this election was also one for the Lord Mayor and the Deputy Lord Mayor which usually has a higher turn-out than purely aldermanic elections.

A second example is the 'Win an Election" workshop which was conducted in 1983. Some 23 of the 35 participants considered that the workshop achieved the following objectives either very well or moderately well: to provide prospective council candidates with an introduction to local government; to provide prospective council candidates with information on the legal requirements for council candidates; and to assist council candidates to prepare and conduct an effective campaign. However, the final objective - to assist council candidates to become effective members of their councils as soon as possible

- was not rated so highly. One participant noted this as not having been achieved at all, and nine rated it as having done so a little. Three of the participants felt they would possibly recommend the workshop to others - the rest definitely would. The course did not meet one person's expectations, equalled expectations of 17 and exceeded the expectations of the rest.

INPUTS

Participants in LoGEAT programs and the target groups for our publicity programs include: everyone over the age of 18; those who are not satisfied with current council actions and may thus be enrolees in the 'Win an Election' workshops; and those who have an actual problem with their council or potential problem to solve and may be participants in a 'Dealing With Your Council' workshop.

Workshop leaders are members, or former members, of local councils. At least two and usually three conduct each workshop. This provides variety of presentation and a 'brains trust' when faced with problems raised by participants Adult Education staff act as co-ordinators for the workshops.

The 'Win an Election' and 'Dealing With Your Council' workshops are conducted in association with TAFE Adult Education by LoGEAT. The Adult Education section collects a fee from participants and pays LoGEAT the regular tutors' pay scale. The media campaigns are paid for by LoGEAT by means of the members' annual subscriptions and the fees paid to the Adult Education section for the workshops. The principal costs involved are postage for news releases and petrol for attending interviews. (Members usually cover this out of their own pockets.)

The Adult Education section provides venues and equipment for the workshops. Each participant is issued with a course handbook which summarises the course. The only equipment required is an overhead projector. LoGEAT's secretary has a personal computer which uses a word processor program to produce news releases and labels for media mailings.

EVALUATION

Public information programs are deliberately structured to emphasise one particular aspect of public participation. As mentioned previously, the first campaign aimed at increasing the number of people enrolled as electors. The second campaign attempted to get people to turn out and vote, whilst the third campaign ('Does Your Councillor Need You?') aimed to increase the number of candidates nominating for council seats. Subsequent campaigns have been organised to remind people of the relevant dates for registration, nomination and elections.

Originally offered as 'Courses for Council Candidates', the 'Win an Election' workshops have contained the following segments.

i. An introduction to local government in Tasmania, which covers the number of councils, divisions, wards, number of councillors, election dates, councillors' duties and services provided by councils.

ii. An opportunity for self-appraisal by participants to assist them to consider why they wanted to run for council, what their strengths and weaknesses are, what skills they need to develop, and how they would develop the required skills.

iii. Electoral procedures including the legal aspects of council elections, such as nominations, voters, qualification of candidates, postal voting and scrutineering.

iv. What the candidates need to know about their electorate. This includes council and ward boundaries, current members and their views and actions on recent council deliberations, members due to retire at the next elections, participants' views on current council policies, local groups, demographic characteristics of the local population, local issues and mass media covering the area.

v. Campaign procedures incorporating publicity, news releases, brochures, photographs, advertising, car stickers, canvassing, letter-boxing, telephone use and door-knocking.

vi. Workbook appendices which include copies of all relevant forms and samples of brochures, advertisements, a campaign planner, budget planner and an opponent's profile sheet. The only major addition over the years has been a more detailed analysis of an elected member's role. This covers the conflicting demands upon councillors as individuals and councils as corporate structures and identifies the difference between the role of 'trustee' and that of 'representative'.

vii. Dealing with a council so that individuals gain the skills to work with their local council in order to increase their chances of obtaining desired objectives. Content has included an introduction to Tasmanian local governments, steps in dealing with councils, options if a council will not co-operate, and how to deal with the media.

INFLUENCES

A positive influence has been the co-operation of the media in the public information campaigns. Without this help, it would be impossible to spread the information.

LoGEAT has prepared a detailed submission to two educational foundations seeking funds to pay for newspaper and radio advertising. Unfortunately, these submissions were not successful due to the Deputy Commissioner for Taxation's refusal to grant us charity status.

Widespread community apathy still allows a substantial number of councillors to join their councils without having to face the electors. This apathy also means that on average only about 20 percent of registered voters bother to vote at elections. This is even worse than it appears because a substantial number of people who are eligible for registration as electors have not bothered to do so.

SOCIAL DEVELOPERS' NETWORK

E. A. Iceton, Armidale.

INTRODUCTION

The Social Developers' Network arose as an initiative within the Department of Continuing Education of the University of New England in 1975 in response to a need to train citizens and their professional colleagues in the field of community or social development. The additional plan - to use the workshops as practicum training for students in a special strand in the new (1976) Diploma in Continuing Education - collapsed when that strand was rejected by the Education Faculty. Nevertheless, the 1975 series of workshops showed the value of the concept, and the building of an autonomous network was already under way.

Since 1976, the workshops have grown into a network of experienced participants who now run their own programs using the format developed in the first two years. Regular workshops held over the last ten years have been self-funding and under participatory rules of design and control.

PROCESS

The main method of teaching and learning is the Social Developers' Workshop. This is usually a residential event, run on participatory lines, using rules that have evolved by consensus decision over the years. The main formal expression of these special cultural rules is the Workshop Contract, an evolving set of twelve or so items, which are renegotiated at each workshop. Within the larger, basic method of the Social Developers' Network (SDN) Workshop is a range of sub-methods which are chosen by the workshop members as the need arises. Some of these have been developed within the SDN only, while others have been developed elsewhere and are used in eclectic fashion.

The overall style of operation can be described in the language of Transactional Analysis as 'Adult-Adult'. Within that, there is an SDN method called Life Script Analysis and Re-write. This is supplemented by methods drawn from Psychosynthesis, Neuro-Linguistic Programming, Rudolf Steiner, or any source judged compatible.

We commonly use a mixture of plenary and small-group formats, focussing on all content aspects that are of concern to social developers. For example, there are presentations of 'macro' issues in social development, followed by questions and discussion. There are also presentations of personal strategy dilemmas, again followed by discussion. In other sessions we may help a person learn new personality

skills and thus avoid failing in a particular task. In small-group sessions we practice creative listening to receive members' ideas on the various themes that concern social developers - such as equality for women, the preservation of the Earth's biosphere, or the interpersonal and social-system values we feel must be adopted if humanity is to have a future.

A subsidiary method is the Social Developers' Network Newsletter, which appears approximately quarterly and contains personal news, correspondence, event notices, book reviews, original articles, and cartoons. Study Tours1 are also a possible method. In 1978 we visited a range of community projects in China and compared local ideas about 'social development' with our own.

Needs assessment is collectively undertaken by the participants themselves as is context analysis. The content and process of any workshop is thus determined by the learners. It consists of presentations by each person, prepared partly in advance and also evolving from what emerges from the dialogue. ('Emergent Curriculum'). Our routine housekeeping arrangements can be seen as an important part of the affective and conative curriculum. The 'setting up' housekeeping arrangements are made by one or more volunteers, usually by agreement at the conclusion of the previous workshop, and at other times on the initiative and willingness of some activist member, who recruits others to help with the task. Later, the housekeeping arrangements are taken over by a roster of volunteers who do the shopping, meal preparation, and cleaning up, as required.

Program evaluation and improvement is done at intervals throughout a workshop, and always when any crisis arises, as well as at the conclusion. It is a whole-group activity. On some occasions the task of monitoring the ongoing process is given, in addition, to one or more members, who then make useful plenary input about the process.

The encouragement of participation and counselling is a task given to every member. Individual members find other potential members on a personal or word-of-mouth basis and by showing them the Brochure and Manifesto, and, perhaps, some of the previous issues of the Newsletter. Finally they may bring them along to experience what a workshop is like. Counselling support is in-built in the normal workshop process.

OUTCOMES

The basic aims of members are set out in the SDN Manifesto, an eight page document. Briefly, the aims are personal, group, and social development, embodying a participatory and ecological model of reality. These goals have been chosen by the members, who are drawn from all sectors of society and who participate as self-starting citizens. We do not accept members who are drafted by their employing organization, although some come to our workshops under official aegis. Beyond personal

development, our aim is to foster a stable yet evolutionary dynamism in society, in our organizations, or in sub-sectors of them. We want society to evolve in ways that will enable humanity to survive collectively and, at the same time, allow individuals their optimal self-actualization. In this context, our aim is to maintain the existing system as long as possible while society develops its successor; that is, we believe that a collapse will be much more traumatic than mere transition, and thus a collapse should be avoided.

The Manifesto sets out some achievements by members. Now in our twelfth year, the ongoing participation by members attests to the value that members feel they gain. One can also point to such instances as the personal development evidenced by the progression of one social developer from a role as housewife involved as a volunteer member of a church guild, to paid employment as the secretary to a Regional Planner during the Australian Assistance Plan, to paid involvement in Child Care, to becoming President of the Council of Social Service in one of the states.

INPUTS

There tends to be about 70 active members across Australia at any given time. There has been a throughput of persons over the twelve years, totalling perhaps 350. People drop out when their life situation temporarily precludes their activism. They may also be over-involved with mainstream career issues, or with marriage and the rearing of young children, or with a marriage break-up. Others may find a specific cause to which they decide to devote all of their energies.

Nevertheless, there has been a core of about twenty persons.who have remained active more or less continuously throughout the 12 years, whose generic interest is in social development as a process, as distinct from the outcomes achieved by any particular social initiative.

Members are drawn, potentially, from all strata of and conditions within society. In practice they are drawn from a very wide range, which is nevertheless far from exhaustive. At this point, we have members from the fields of health, including health educators, drug and alcohol rehabilitation specialists, pathologists and general practitioners; education, including librarians, teachers, secretaries and tertiary academics; welfare, incorporating volunteers, community workers, social workers, social planners, child care workers, and counsellors; and religion including ministers, administrators, educators, and lay brothers. Members also include housewives and mothers, economists, law graduates, artists, farmers, computer programmers, local government councillors, and public servants. Our ages range from children to teenagers to octogenarians.

Our teachers, discussion leaders, and co-ordinators in all cases are drawn from among the membership. We are a participatory, co-evolutionary, co-learning network which believes in learning through practice how to make our values operational.

We depend primarily on in-kind support, and pay our way on an individual, share-cost basis. We receive no outside funds, in general.

Travel costs have been a fairly major impediment for some people, since social developers rarely have large salaries. At the January 1987 workshop, for the first time, we equalised these costs among participants: those of us living locally or within a short distance agreed to pay part of the cost for those coming long distances.

From an original donation and ongoing subscriptions we now have several thousand dollars placed in 'ethical investment'. The income from this is used to finance various activities which we see as socially developmental.

The SDN tends to use the members' own equipment, such as typewriters or photocopy equipment, to which members can obtain 'at cost' access. Basically the network needs little in a material sense, and relies almost totally on volunteer labour. Members regularly put together method-summaries, check-lists, book reviews, etc., which are then used in workshops or published in the Newsletter.

EVOLUTION

The Social Developers' Network grew out of the workshops for 'Social Development Practitioners' launched during 1975. 'Series I' comprised three, eight-day residential workshops, run in March, July and November that year. 'Series II' ran in July and December. Both series were conducted in the vicinity of Newcastle, New South Wales, in vacant nursing staff accommodation at two hospitals.

In 1976, the participants in Series I and II indicated that they wished to run more workshops, but nearer to where they lived. Thus began the pattern of workshops in regional locations; the Sydney-Canberra area, in Victoria, and near Newcastle. Later ones were held in Tasmania and in Cairns in North Queensland. By 1979 the first 'planning workshop' for a routine, annual, national workshop was held in Armidale, New South Wales. An Annual National Workshop1 of six to seven days' duration, which includes the Annual General Meeting, has been held every January since. These are open to all members from all states, and have all been held in Armidale, except for the years 1985 and 1986, when we rented a ski lodge at Jindabyne in the Snowy Mountains. Our Armidale venue is the University of New England's student flats. We customarily rent four apartments. These provide single study-bedrooms, plus communal kitchens, bathrooms, laundries, and plenary and group meeting rooms.

All work is shared by members on a voluntary basis, including catering, shopping and cleaning. Living costs are also shared. This is the general pattern for most Social Developers' workshops, wherever they are held. (Occasionally, where institutional dining rooms are available at moderate rates, we may make use of a meals service.)

INFLUENCES

The major influences on the development of the SDN have been both internal and external. The methodology has evolved over the years, out of the felt needs of members, and our reflection on our experience. Much has depended on the role played by 'key' members at any given time. Key members are those who have the confidence and the personality skills to launch local workshops in their own area, mobilizing members to form a local group. When a key member in an area gets into personal difficulty such as in their career or marriage - then sometimes no other local member feels able to take the intitiative for launching ongoing local activity.

In many cases, members have difficulty getting the mainstream to recognize their social development work as the work it is. Usually they can manage to come to the annual national workshop in January, but they may be unable to attend events at other times. It is commonly difficult for mainstream administrators to grasp the generic relevance of our SDN training to the day-to-day work of members in whatever organizational role they play. On the other hand, some proportion of members do attend events in official working time. In general, many senior administrators predictably have a value system and personality skills different from what we envisage are required in a 'socially developmental' society. It is therefore understandable that we should encounter certain difficulties, no matter how responsible, constructive and gradualist our goals may be.

As Marilyn Ferguson[1] and Alvin Toffler[2] have pointed out, the members of 'The Aquarian Conspiracy', world-wide, tend to be gaining strength as each year goes by. After all, we are consciously and specifically promoting societal adaptation to the reality now and to the emergent future. We in the SDN are an Australian example. As J.K. Galbraith has said, social change does not take place unless and until the objective social circumstances require some kind of change. Thus, it is always actually 'the relentless march of (objective) circumstance' that finally undermines the conventional wisdom.

In a way somewhat akin to the earlier Marxists - whose ideas we consider no longer engage with the reality now - we believe that the 'relentless march of circumstance' is moving our industrial civilization towards its closing stages. We aim, therefore, to offer a possible way out of the coming downturn, by showing how our species can draw upon and foster our evolving, human, social

creativity. We aim to help society go where our collective human experience and our evolving thinking will lead us, and to do this in a participatory way as our general principle of operation. We hope by this means to establish 'islands' of constructive social action to which citizens can cling as the traditional social landmarks are inexorably swept away.

We see the kind of learning we promote as centrally important to contemporary society, but find that it falls between various stools and sits officially on none. 'Education' tends to focus only on cognitive aspects of content, in relation to individuals, ignoring affective and conative learnings, process learnings, group learning and adaptive cultural phenomena generally. On the other hand, the fields of 'Welfare' or 'Social Work' tend not to focus on learning at all. They, also, focus largely on individuals, and on people who have already 'failed' in some way. Yet no other professions come as close as Education and Social Work to what the SDN is concerned with.

Our movement for social development is affected, like everything else, by economic circumstances. Difficult times like the present tend to polarize society into 'backwardists' and 'forwardists', and the SDN's members tend to favour the latter, across all political persuasions. Under the influence of our present obsolete cultural value system, difficult times tend unfortunately to bring conflicts to the surface where they often generate heat rather than light. Under these circum- stances, creative, adaptive behaviours that may be an answer, even though they require risk-taking, tend to find less favour than at other times. This happens even when it is clear that 'more of the same' will not serve. So the end effect is that social developers in paid employment are suffering relatively greater economic insecurity at present.

Clearly, vastly more rapid, societal re-orientation to the emerging realities could be achieved if all citizens with social developer insights and skills were in a position to work full-time in this field. The proportion at present is perhaps less than 5 percent. If society's present, top decision- makers could be persuaded to go further and instal the new institutional structure that society requires for routinely achieving optimal adaptation to the changing realities, then, of course, progress would be more satisfactory still.

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1. Ferguson Marilyn, The Aquarian Conspiracy, Paladin; 1982.

2. Toffler, Alvin, Previews and Premises, London; Pan,

THE TRADE UNION POSTAL COURSES SCHEME

Liz Bluff
TUPC Education Officer

INTRODUCTION

The Trade Union Postal Courses Scheme (TUPC) is a national distance education programme designed for and supported by the Australian union movement. The Scheme, based at the Workers' Educational Association in Adelaide, is unique in Australia. It was set up in 1964 by an Adelaide Tramways Union man, Jack Nancarrow, who saw the need for a type of education that would be readily available to every unionist in Australia.

Over the past 23 years TUPC's courses have established an Australia-wide reputation. The Scheme has played a vital role in bringing adult education to unionists in remote country areas, people who work offshore, shiftworkers and others who would not normally have ready access to it. More than 35,000 students have taken part in TUPC courses since the Scheme's inception.

PROCESS

Due to the very nature and location of their work, many people do not have the time or the opportunity to attend courses. The TUPC Scheme was established as a distance learning programme, in recognition of the factors that hinder participation, with the aim of facilitating worker access to adult education. Seventeen courses make up the TUPC programme. They combine courses aimed at developing the confidence and skills of students to derive the benefits of adult education, with courses providing opportunities for workers to develop perspectives on social, political and economic issues.

From the National Centre of the Scheme at Adelaide in South Australia, TUPC reaches students within Australia by post. When a student enrols in a course he/she is sent the first two lessons. (Courses vary in length from six to twelve lessons). Each lesson incorporates an assignment which the student completes and returns to the National Centre. Assignments are posted out to course tutors who provide constructive comments and feedback to the student. TUPC's aim is that tutors should work on the positive aspects of students' work and encourage students to develop ideas rather than rendering them powerless through too much criticism. Assignments are returned to students via the National Centre. TUPC aims to return assignments within two weeks. Minimising this turn-around time is crucial to maintaining student interest and ensuring that feedback is provided to stimulate and motivate students to continue studying.

Many of the people with whom TUPC works have had negative experiences in education systems in the past. Some have had little or no formal education. It is therefore essential that participation in any form of education for these people be slowly and thoughtfully encouraged. This is fostered by the individualised relationship established between the tutor and the student. It is private and provides a situation where confidence and trust in learning can develop.

TUPC courses are written in clear, unpretentious language and deal with topics of every-day significance. The course procedure is flexible; students are able to start when they wish, choose studies which attract their interest, and return assignments at their own pace. There are no formal qualifications for any of the courses, nor are there tests or examinations. This flexibility acts as a positive incentive to students who are not accustomed to formal study and who would be put off by rigid adherence to deadlines and timetables, or the pressure of examinations. On finishing a course, the student receives a certificate of completion.

The TUPC Scheme has not had the advantage of resources to utilise the various technologies, including video materials and telephone hook-ups, explored as study media, or other distance learning programmes in further education. For that reason the Scheme has concentrated on producing lesson material written in a clear and easy to read style, which aims to present ideas and issues in an interesting way, and helps students to develop skills and form opinions about issues relevant to them as workers.

The experience of the TUPC Scheme is that this medium, although conventional, has been effective in encouraging students to study, in stimulating interest, and promoting confidence and self-esteem. It has also proven accessible in so far as TUPC students include a significant percentage of migrants, women, rural residents and people with limited educational opportunities.

It is TUPC's experience that there is a strong element of independent initiative and motivation on the part of students who enrol. Undertaking a course can be an occasion for workers, and particularly unionists, to contemplate going beyond the daily routine of working life and to think about improvements to conditions, aims and strategies. It is through this that a greater appreciation of the role which they can play in changing working conditions can develop.

In planning and developing its programme, TUPC has, to some extent, drawn on the work of other agencies who have identified particular educational needs. TUPC's role, then, has been to implement courses which address this need through the medium of distance learning and by utilising the extensive union network to target particular groups.

In this regard, a significant example is the component of the TUPC programme which deals with remedial education. TUPC has been conscious of the status of adult illiteracy in Australia and the

significant proportion of the adult population who have completed only compulsory secondary schooling. TUPC's basic skills courses seek to remedy educational deficits of unionists participating in the Scheme.

TUPC has also taken the approach of asking students what they want. In 1985, a survey was conducted of postal course students in which they were asked to suggest further courses which they would like the Scheme to provide. Many suggestions were made in the areas of industrial relations, current affairs and politics, and job skills. The more popular suggestions have been taken up and authors commissioned to write courses.

All courses are planned and developed in consultation with the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) and the Trade Union Training Authority (TUTA). In this respect the course programme reflects issues of concern to unions in Australia. This relationship is formalised through the Trade Union Postal Courses Committee whose membership includes representatives of the ACTU and TUTA, as well as from the Workers' Educational Association. This Committee is responsible both for programme planning and for evaluation of the Scheme. The constant review and expansion of courses is an ongoing task and a necessary one if the Scheme is to maintain its relevancy. Courses are generally reviewed every two years.

There are certain features of the TUPC programme which are most significant in encouraging student participation in TUPC. These features are:

i. utilisation of a strong network of community groups and union organisations to establish contact with many potential students who would be hesitant to approach a major educational institution or commercial college;

ii. provision of shorter bridging courses which encourage student enrolments by reason of a less threatening commitment;

iii. flexibility about time allowed for lesson returns and course completion;

iv. the opportunity to enrol without having to be formally assessed;

v. access to a range of courses with no restrictions on which courses can be taken; and

vi. the personal and individualised tutor relationship which works on positive reinforcement to stimulate confidence and interest in study.

Moreover, written contact is made with students who discontinue studies, to encourage them to keep going. Students are also assured that they can take a break if they need to do so and continue their studies later at a more convenient time.

OUTCOMES

The rationale of the TUPC Scheme has been developed in consultation with the learners, as represented by affiliated unions. The Scheme seeks to address the needs of workers who have been disadvantaged or disillusioned by the education processes of their early school years. The Scheme recognises that many workers have experienced inequalities with regard to educational opportunities. It also recognises the link between education and control over circumstances and accordingly seeks to enable workers to develop skills which will allow them to take control over their own future

The Scheme is directed primarily to members of 88 unions which assist in funding the Scheme by payment of annual affiliation fees. The collective membership of these unions (and hence the largest audience of the programme) exceeds 1.5 million. TUPC aims to broaden the educational opportunities of:

i. those whose secondary education has been affected by the lack of facilities at school or home, by language difficulties, or by financial and other problems of a socio-economic nature;

ii. those who have completed only compulsory secondary schooling; and

iii. those who are 'isolated' by reason of geography, disability, domestic duties or working hours.

The chief objective of the Scheme is to develop the skills of course participants with the aim of making students better skilled, with a more flexible outlook and able to take advantage of a wider range of opportunities in education, as well as in their working and community lives. TUPC courses aim, firstly, to provide basic skills. A component of the TUPC programmes is basic skills courses including public speaking, clear thinking, everyday English and meeting procedural skills. Through these courses the Scheme aims to help unionists collect, sort out, and express ideas and information about the world in which they work. It is clear that once having begun to master these skills, which very often is simply a process of demystification and gaining self-confidence, people are much more prepared to embark on wider issues.

Secondly, TUPC courses are intended to arouse interest in and strengthen loyalty to trade unions. The emphasis of the Scheme remains on courses of direct relevance to the union movement such as Australian Arbitration Systems, History of Australian Trade Unionism and Trade Unions in Australia. Thirdly, TUPC courses aim to place labour problems in their social and economic context.

Social, economic and political issues are explained so that the students can gain a wider perspective on issues which directly affect them as workers by means of such courses as Introduction to Economics, Government and Politics, Industrial Psychology, Wages, Prices and Profits, and Women in the Workforce.

Fourthly, TUPC trains workers for responsible roles by means of such courses as The Job Representative, The Shop Steward, and Health and Safety at Work.

With the promotion by and support of affiliated unions the TUPC distance education programme has been uniquely placed to make adult education available to many people for whom it would otherwise be inaccessible by reason of language, geography, disability, domestic ties, working hours or lack of confidence to attend a "face to face" course.

A survey of TUPC's students in 1986 showed that about eight percent of students were born in non-English speaking countries and spoke English as a second language, 45 percent of TUPC students were women, and 50 percent of TUPC students completed only compulsory secondary education.

When students commence a course with TUPC, they are asked to complete and return with the first lesson a brief questionnaire which provides information about themselves for their tutor. Information is obtained in this way about each student's residential location, gender, ethnicity, age, occupation, education level and reasons for doing the particular course. A significant result of the survey is that TUPC achieves its aim to reach workers in Australia, with 30 per cent of students living in country areas, 67 per cent in capital cities and 3 per cent in major towns. Amongst TUPC's country students, some must be classed as remote, such as those in the Pilbara region of Australia's north-west, Central Australia and the Northern Territory. One of the main reasons why TUPC has continued to enjoy the support of Australian unions is its success in reaching workers such as those in remote areas who do not normally have ready access to union education either through their unions or the Trade Union Training Authority.

The nature and success of the TUPC Scheme and its role in union education is best demonstrated by some student profiles.

PETER is a ship deckhand who lives in Perth and left school at 15 after obtaining an Achievement Certificate. Peter states, "I consider myself to have been fairly undeveloped during my early schooling years. During the past few years I have learnt a lot, probably due to job security, but I can still do better...." Peter is a shiftworker and says he finds it difficult to get time off work at the right time to attend courses. He decided to do the Trade Union Postal Courses "Study Skills for Adults" in order to improve his study skills and learning capacity. He would like to continue his study, either doing mature-age matriculation or a maritime course.

JANE has recently returned to the workforce after a six-years break to have a family and is now a public service clerk. Recently elected chairwoman of her workplace health and safety committee, Jane decided to do TUPC's "Health and Safety at Work" course after reading about it in her union's journal. Jane indicated: "I have recently joined the public service and see a definite need to obtain further educational qualifications for job progression. I am chairperson of the Occupational Health and Safety Committee at my workplace and obtain a great deal of satisfaction in the setting up and organisation of the Committee under the legislation. My aim is therefore to obtain a Graduate Diploma or similar in perhaps safety or occupational health. My situation however is vastly different from my last attempt at studying (some 12-14 years ago) and I feel that the completion of this course can benefit me".

GRAEME works as a production operator on an off-shore oil-rig in Bass Strait. Before this, he worked in other remote jobs as a maintenance worker at Robe River in Australia's north-west and at Mt. Isa. He has also worked as a radio operator offshore and in the ambulance service. Working off-shore makes it difficult to get to courses. Graeme finds the Trade Union Postal Courses a convenient way to study. Graeme completed form five at high school and is currently doing TUPC's "Shop Steward" course.

JACQUES was born in Mauritius and now lives in Melbourne where he works as a storeman and forklift driver. At 43 he found his children understood new maths better than he did. Jacques reached form three at school in Mauritius. After finding out about Trade Union Postal Courses through the union journal, Jacques commenced study in two courses "Arithmetic and Statistics" and "Everyday English". His confidence boosted by his experience with TUPC, Jacques is keen to continue his studies.

HOWARD is a postman at Maroubra, New South Wales. He obtained a high school certificate 12 years ago and has not studied since. After being elected as a health and safety representative at work, Howard decided to do TUPC's "Health and Safety at Work" course. He says he is interested in studying further and felt that health and safety was a good start because "I can also learn through my job".

STEPHEN is 21 and employed as a storeman. He completed the school certificate at high school and now finds, "I want to start learning again. I feel my brain isn't being used enough. As I am working night shift, I have plenty of time to allocate to doing more of these courses". Stephen is studying "Arithmetic and Statistics" and "Clear Thinking" through TUPC.

MARY lives in Alice Springs where she works as a clerical officer. She is 42 years of age and completed "O" levels at school in England before migrating to Australia. Returning to the workforce after 20 years raising five children, Mary was interested in TUPC's "Women in the Workforce" course. Mary's assignment work on this course was excellent. She has also completed TUPC's "Arithmetic and Statistics", "Clear Thinking" and "The Job Representative". On the strength of her success with these courses Mary is now studying "Government and Politics" and "Economics" in preparation for units she will take in a diploma course.

LUCAS went to school in Holland and subsequently obtained trade qualifications as a fitter and boiler attendant. He is now 41 and works as a boiler watch-keeper. Lucas decided to do a Trade Union Postal Course because, "I thought I was getting a bit rusty. I mucked around too much at school. Also, I think that doing a postal course is a good way of utilising my time while watching boilers. My aim is to obtain a greater awareness of my own capabilities, express myself better and to be of use to others". Lucas has now completed TUPC courses "Clear Thinking", "Arithmetic and Statistics", "How to Study", and "Everyday English."

HELENE was born in Sydney. Her parents are Greek-speaking. Helene is now 19 and having completed high school is working in a supermarket. Helene decided that she wanted to do some further study. She commenced "Government and Politics" since as she says, "I never understood how Australian politics worked when I was at high school". On the strength of her TUPC success, Helene decided to study further at university. She is now doing a degree in economics and finds that TUPC's course not only provided her with some direction but also insight relevant to her tertiary studies.

INPUT

TUPC has had an annual student enrolment of from 2,000 to 2,800 for the last four years. Prior to this, annual enrolments were of the order of 1,000 - 1,500. This dramatic increase was achieved through the successful promotion of the Scheme through the unions. As long as there is a demand for the TUPC programme, there is justification to continue the Scheme. In that sense, there is no set pre-

requisite number of students for the Scheme to function. The continuing demand for TUPC courses, reflected in the high enrolment rate, has meant that this has not been an issue for TUPC. However, it is interesting to note that from the outset the Scheme was made available to unions throughout Australia, the main reason being the belief that the total union population in South Australia was insufficient to support an adequate range of courses.

Encouraging the participation of women has been a priority for TUPC in recent years and one that has been successfully achieved. With 45 percent of TUPC's students being women, this is similar to the percentage of women in the Australian workforce. This success is attributed to the accessibility of the Scheme, the flexibility with regard to time and the fact that learning at a distance for some women is less intimidating than attending classes.

The Scheme currently employs a full-time Education Officer who is responsible for co-ordination of the Scheme as well as commissioning authors, course revision and development, and liaison with union affiliates. A full-time clerical officer is responsible for administration including student enrolments, processing lessons, and general support, and a part-time Publications Officer prepares lesson material for publication and produces promotional brochures and Scheme advertising. In addition to three staff, TUPC has fourteen tutors who mark student assignments. These tutors are variously located around Australia in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Perth and Adelaide. Current tutors are academics, teachers, union officials or trainers with the Trade Union Training Authority (TUTA). The qualification common to all tutors is an ability to approach issues involved in the lesson material from a union point of view. Authors are contracted to write courses on a sessional basis and in the light of their sympathy and appreciation of the educational needs of workers, their understanding of the union movement in Australia, and their recognised expertise in the subject area.

The major source of ongoing funding for the TUPC Scheme is union affiliation fees. In 1986, TUPC received $56,000 from this source. This was 50 percent of TUPC's operating costs for the year. There are now 88 unions affiliated with the Scheme: 40 are affiliated on a federal basis and 48 are state unions or state branches. Union affiliates pay 7.5 percent per member to support TUPC. Members of unions affiliated with the Scheme can take postal courses free of charge. There is an affiliation ceiling of $2,200 per annum. Since its establishment by the Whitlam federal government in 1975, the Trade Union Training Authority (TUTA) has provided an annual grant to TUPC, the value of which is approximately one-third of TUPC's operating expenses.

TUPC accepts enrolments from students who are not members of any of the unions affiliated with the Scheme. These students pay a course fee of $25 or $35, depending on the course. The Scheme receives about $10,000 per annum in private student fees. In addition, spouses of members of unions affiliated with TUPC can enrol at a discounted rate of $10 per course.

The WEA provides the infrastructure necessary for the Scheme to operate, including office facilities and computerisation, and over the last five years has provided a small grant to meet the TUPC deficit.

EVALUATION

Although postal courses have been an important form of union education for many years in Britain and the Scandinavian countries, when the TUPC Scheme was introduced in South Australia in 1964, and subsequently extended throughout Australia, it was a new development in this country. Furthermore, it was introduced in an industrial environment with virtually no tradition of adult education designed specifically for, and supported by, the organised trade union movement.

Eleven postal courses were initially offered. These were "Federal, State and Local Government", "Economics for the Man in the Street", "How to Study", "World Affairs", "Arithmetic and Statistics", "Trade Union Branch Officials", "Shop Stewards", "The Australian Arbitration System", "Public Speaking" and "Chairmanship". Over the years some of these courses have been replaced, new courses added and others retained but rewritten and updated.

The changes to the TUPC programme over the years reflect changes in the priorities of the Australian union movement. For example, the recent introduction of the courses "Health and Safety at Work" and "Women in the Workforce" reflects an increasing commitment to these broader issues by the union movement.

The relationship with unions has had a significant influence on TUPC, both for the provision of funds to maintain the Scheme, and also for the development of and changes in the programme over the years.

The remedial and basic skills component of the programme has been developed in recognition of the barriers of discrimination and disadvantage which exist in Australian society. The disproportionate burden borne by youth as unemployment has grown, and the deteriorating labour market conditions which have particularly severe effects on specific groups such as migrants, women, the disabled, country dwellers, and people in the older working age ranges, are issues which have highlighted the need for this sort of programme, which is as great today as it was at the outset of the Scheme.

It has been the experience of the TUPC Scheme that despite the remedial and bridging nature of some other programmes available, for example through TAFE, many people lack the confidence to tackle adult education as offered by institutions for further education. This is the role which TUPC has set for itself and which has been fulfilled successfully.

No amount of statistics on student enrolments or lesson returns can convey this feeling of success as experienced by TUPC staff and tutors. It is gained through student assignments and through the spontaneous thanks and unsolicited feedback from students as to the value of the Scheme to them. From this response it is clear that, for many students, postal courses are the first contact they have had with education since leaving school. Although a TUPC course cannot hope to do more than introduce students to the subject and arouse their interest in pursuing it further, these functions of stimulation and introduction are of great importance to the individual and ultimately to the community in which each is involved.

INFLUENCES

TUPC's network of union affiliates has contributed to the Scheme, providing practical support and helping TUPC to reach many people who would not normally contemplate or have ready access to further education.

It is regrettable that given the positive and unique features of the Scheme, TUPC has always been plagued by financial difficulties. From the early years of operation in the 1960s, TUPC made several attempts to secure federal government funding. These attempts were unsuccessful until the allocation of a grant in 1975 via the Trade Union Training Authority. While greatly improving TUPC's financial status, this grant was never adequate to allow the extent of upgrading of lesson materials and experimentation with alternative media which was desired. Moreover, the Scheme's resources for payment of authors and tutors have been inadequate to properly remunerate these people for their generous contribution. In 1986, the history of inadequate and insecure funding culminated in the WEA considering whether the Scheme has a future. At the time of writing this is still in doubt, and TUPC is dependent on securing ongoing funding at an adequate level from an external agency. There is no doubt that this financial insecurity is the most significant negative influence that hinders TUPC's programme efforts, and indeed threatens its continuance.

CONCLUSION

In summary, TUPC, as a distance learning programme designed for and supported by workers through their unions, has been uniquely placed to bring further education to people for whom it would otherwise be inaccessible. The Scheme has encouraged and stimulated many people to study who would not otherwise have recognised that they had a second chance to study.

A NON-CREDIT DISTANCE EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Robyn Wolstenholme
UNElearn Co-ordinator

INTRODUCTION

UNElearn is a programme provided by the Continuing Education Department of the University of New England. In 1954, when the University became an autonomous institution, it was decided to commence a group discussion programme similar to one already being offered by the University of Sydney. UNElearn has evolved from that scheme and provides a non-credit correspondence learning programme for groups of self-motivated adults in a variety of subjects which include literature, drama, art, music and social issues. UNElearn also maintains a study skills correspondence programme and conducts courses in Mathematics, English Expression and Essay Writing for individuals commencing tertiary studies. This case study will focus only upon the processes and activities of the UNElearn group-study correspondence programme.

Because of its rural location, UNElearn has traditionally been concerned with providing a service to country people especially those in isolated areas. The numbers of participants have fluctuated over the years and after a recent 'falling-off' in numbers, UNElearn is undergoing a period of re-evaluation, revitalization, and change. We hope, in the future, to reach a broader cross-section of the community. This is now occurring.

PROCESS

Integral to the success of the teaching/learning process are the successful working relations of the members of the study group. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance that the promotion of smooth group dynamics is central to all teaching methods. Most courses proceed, and proceed successfully, when both course and support structures are directed to this end.

A group of about 10 individuals from a study group enrol in a UNElearn course of their choice. Enrolments take place throughout the year. The average course consists of six units. Groups meet every two or three weeks, ideally, working through a study unit and prescribed discussion questions at each meeting, each individual having undertaken required reading prior to the meeting.

The teaching methods applied by UNElearn may be described in three separate but interdependent categories. Learning takes place through this structured method but also as a result of unstructured

activities. Instructional methods include the dissemination of course materials, tutoring by correspondence and personal involvement by UNElearn staff.

Course materials consist of a set of lecture notes based upon a unit system, questions for discussion, occasionally tapes and videos, a reading guide and a box of books provided by the Adult Education section of the State Library. The book box contains multiple copies of the main texts and a selection of reference materials. The lecture notes and questions for discussion are central to the successful use of other materials and in promoting effective group dynamics. Ideally, and this has not always been the case, each lecture is written with the problems of distance learning in mind, i.e., anticipating problems and questions which might arise and with clear instructions as to required reading for each unit. The discussion questions at the end of each unit must be relevant to that particular lecture unit and be designed to appeal to adults at various levels of learning and interest. When discussion questions are not relevant, group interest and confidence suffers. A variety in the type of questions asked prevents domination by some members of the group or a too narrow focus on the substance of each unit.

A tutor, usually a member of staff at the University or a post-graduate student, comments by letter and by tape on the replies to the questions for discussion submitted by members of the group. Detailed academic work is written; more general comments are intended to consist of constructive, friendly criticism. Prompt, detailed replies aid learning and promote a high group morale. (Late or inadequate tutors' replies have the opposite effect). The personal contact enhanced by taped conversations and the continuing relationships between students and tutors through various courses can be rewarding for both students and tutors.

We see the day-to-day running and personal interaction between members of UNElearn staff and students as part of the teaching process because of their role in promoting good group relations by foreseeing problems and smoothing out difficulties. UNElearn provides booklets on group dynamics on a lending basis to newly-formed groups. Each set of lecture notes carries a guide to methods of planning and conducting meetings. At the suggestion of a member of the teaching staff in the Department of Continuing Education, all student replies are directed to UNElearn and from UNElearn to tutors; this ensures that UNElearn staff are in constant contact with students and tutors.

INPUTS

The main influences on programme development must be seen as market forces and community need. The planning of new courses is, at present, based upon the innovative expansion of subject areas which have proved the most popular: literature, art, history and music. Innovations include originality of course content and design and the increasing use of audio-visual material. We also hope that a

planned bi-annual newsletter to which students will contribute will act as a forum for discussion in the planning process of new courses. Community need in the planning of courses is being taken into account. For instance, members of the local branch of the Country Women's Association, disturbed recently by problems of race relations in rural areas, sought contact with UNElearn and intend to sponsor the production of three courses in Aboriginal Studies.

UNElearn has as potential course writers both working and retired academics and post-graduate students. I believe UNElearn offers a unique opportunity for post-graduates to formulate their research into teaching courses, test course structures and gain tutoring experience. At the same time they can derive some income from both course production and tutoring. We are currently encouraging post-graduates to write courses in their subject areas under the guidance of their academic supervisors.

Participation in UNElearn courses is at present being encouraged through the mail-out of catalogues to existing and past group members, adult education and community centres and libraries in rural areas and country centres. In an attempt to broaden our base we are approaching various clubs and organisations throughout New South Wales. When possible a promotional visit to regional centres and existing groups is undertaken by the UNElearn co-ordinator. A regular newsletter is also expected to encourage participation.

OUTCOMES

The goal of UNElearn has been to provide a means of education to people in remote country areas, principally in New South Wales but also neighbouring States. While most UNElearn participants live in country areas, few live in remote areas. The same forces of distance, time and nature, which prevent traditional teaching methods in remote areas, act against the success of the UNElearn programme. In Cunnamulla, Queensland, for example, several women had to travel nearly 150 kms. to meet. The telephone service in the area was often out of order and the weekly mail delivery was frequently delayed. Consequently, meetings were often thwarted by time and the weather; books were lost and replies delayed, sometimes for weeks. It is, therefore, the people in the less remote but still disadvantaged country areas who derive the most benefit from UNElearn. We also believe UNElearn should be available to those in large towns and cities as factors other than distance can prevent learning by orthodox methods.

The benefits to people studying through discussion courses can be several. Firstly, they come into contact with a learning institution through a structured course of study. This can ease access to other forms of study such as non-formal weekend schools or formal education courses. Secondly, the UNElearn courses are appreciated and valued for their own sake and the stimulation they provide. Thirdly, groups have access to study aids, books, and video-tapes, which might otherwise be denied

them. Fourthly, there is perhaps the greatest benefit of all - the development of skills which grow, mostly as by-products of the structured teaching methods. These skills, sensitive group interaction, leadership, writing and clear-thinking are recognised by members of groups and highly-valued. Consider the imaginative, unstructured learning and group cohesiveness involved when a group of 'middle-aged' women studying Colonial History, dressed as convicts were 'abducted' by a mud-smeared, ragged member of their group. Together they lunched on salt-beef and sea biscuits served in a tin pannikin; their only concession to non-realism was to exclude the maggots from the meat!

The participants of UNElearn courses are predominantly women, the majority of whom are 'middle-aged' and 'middle-class'. By these terms I mean aged around 40 to 55 years, of relatively comfortable financial means and often held to be of some social status within the community. While these women appear to form the nucleus of clientele there is a minority who are not as financially secure. While the fees charged by UNElearn are still relatively low they are not affordable by truly disadvantaged groups such as pensioners and single parents. As few disadvantaged people participated in the UNElearn programme when fees were affordable by them, it would appear that methods other than the lowering of fees should be used to encourage the disadvantaged into the programme. There are current plans to seek funding from service groups so that the UNElearn programme can be utilized through and with the guidance of workers within existing Family Support and Community Services.

The staff of UNElearn consists only of two part-time workers: the co-ordinator who is a mature-age Arts graduate and a secretary-clerk. Much more could be accomplished with adequate support and the programme is largely limited by this fact. UNElearn, of course, employs many writers and tutors on a part-time contract basis.

UNElearn was, until recently, charging fees designed to cover the cost of group servicing only, i.e., postage, telephone calls and tutors' fees. The writing of new courses was funded by a grant from the New South Wales Board of Adult Education. However, new financial directives by the University, which comply with the Commonwealth Government's present stringent policies on adult education, have led to the need to increase fees and we aim to accomplish this as fully as the market will bear. It will be remembered that the majority of UNElearn's clientele are relatively 'well-off' but we do not wish to lose those people who are in a less fortunate economic position. This issue is of deep concern to all University officials engaged in non-credit extension work. It has also been seen as desirable and necessary to increase the amount paid to tutors. At the present time this fee tallies with the hourly casual rate for essay marking in tertiary institutions. We would like to increase tutors' fees further as tutors form such a valuable part of the organisation and success of the programme.

UNElearn is supplied by the University with staff, office space, basic office equipment, routine stationery requirements, lighting and heating, and the shared use of a word-processor.

EVALUATION

The main method of evaluation is by use of a questionnaire that is sent to the groups at the end of each course. Other methods of formative and summative evaluation take place through face-to-face and telephone discussions with students and through close contact and dialogue with tutors. The two criticisms which are most frequently voiced are that, firstly, there have been insufficient new courses introduced with a corresponding lack of variety in subject matter. Secondly, students find tardiness in tutors' replies frustrating and annoying. The latter problem is sometimes unavoidable because of the reliance on postal services.

INFLUENCES

Some of the most positive influences upon the direction and efficiency of UNElearn come from the financial backing of the New South Wales Board of Adult Education. As stated above, the Board provides funds for the writing of new courses and also for the promotion of the programme. Another major positive influence is exerted through the Adult Education section of the State Library through the provision of books and library service to correspondence students. It is doubtful whether UNElearn could function in any comprehensive way without this facility or the assistance of the Board.

One important factor which must influence the direction of UNElearn is the rapid and expansive growth of the mass media and technology. There are good Adult Education programmes on television and radio, and video and audio equipment can be found in most Australian homes. If UNElearn is to compete with these sophisticated modes of learning and leisure, it must make extensive use of the same technology. There are excellent facilities available for use by UNElearn in the audio-visual department of the University and increasing use will be made of these facilities.

OTHER

UNElearn's continued role in non-credit Adult Education is somewhat tenuous due to growing financial pressures placed upon the field of Adult Education generally. It would seem the most logical way of overcoming these problems is to develop at least a few courses with appeal and benefit to private enterprise. In this way it may be possible to continue to make available to the community the education most liberal thinkers have traditionally seen as a right, regardless of ability or non-ability to pay, but which is being increasingly regarded as merely another market commodity.

SCHOOL FOR SENIORS, ALBURY

Olga Benham and **Sue Vickers**,
School for Seniors, Albury

INTRODUCTION

The Albury School for Seniors is a voluntary organization which operates in co-operation with the Continuing Education Centre, Albury-Wodonga, and, in large part, by support from the N.S.W. Board of Adult Education. It offers a range of educational programmes for senior adults.

PROCESS

Staff have been generally recruited by means of enquiring at secondary schools for recently retired teachers, through monitoring of newspaper articles and by means of general questioning in the community. Advertising sometimes becomes necessary. The school co-ordinator carefully selects teaching staff with a good rapport with older people in the community. This is very necessary and greatly valued by members of the School.

We employ trained and untrained tutors. The untrained are experienced in their field, and welcome the opportunity to pass on their knowledge, taking great pleasure in the giving of their time for a small remuneration. Our funding is such that we can offer only a small salary to our tutors.

We do not encourage a classroom situation. Members are made to feel free to 'listen and learn' or participate with questions and answers. The atmosphere is completely informal but always informative. We encourage digression, as tutors (especially those in the younger generations) and members enjoy the opportunity for discussion of remembered or half-forgotten facts from the participants' school days.

No qualifications are required of members, nor do we hold examinations. In classes such as Art and Creative Writing, work is shown or read out in class for constructive comment by other members and tutors.

The programme co-ordinator is always ready to receive useful suggestions. Other centres of a similar nature mail their programmes for the exchange of ideas. The range of classes offered depends a great deal on the availability of tutors for subjects or topics.

In recent months we have had access to the resources of the Riverina Murray Institute of Higher Education in Albury, for tutors. Some have been found among senior students there who are grateful for the opportunity to gain teaching experience and benefit financially. The Conservatorium of Music in Albury has made a room available to School for Seniors, which means we can now offer music studies at beginner and advanced levels.

Lack of adequate space curtails improvements in the programmes offered. Additional subjects would necessitate more classrooms and a greater number of teachers. As the School members are mainly pensioners, our aim is to keep fees to a minimum by allowing full participation in any or all subjects on both days of each week that the School for Seniors operates. We, therefore, would need a considerable increase in enrolments to meet the extra salaries as we cannot anticipate any increase in our present

A China Painting Class at the School for Seniors

The happy, friendly atmosphere of learning in a group situation, together with morning tea and lunch time fellowship in the Common Room, strengthens the bonds of friendship which extends beyond school days. New friendships are formed and old friendships renewed. Mid- and end-of-term community luncheons are crowded, fun-filled events with performances by the Drama and Singing Groups and Fitness Classes. Organised bus tours and various other social activities motivate and stimulate members, many of whom previously led lonely lives.

Committee members are carefully selected for their ability to welcome and help new members to integrate. The number of foundation and long-standing members bears testimony to the success of this aspect of the School for Seniors, Albury, now in its eleventh year of operation.

OUTCOMES

The programme, for men and women over fifty years of age, offers interests and activities designed to give pleasure, mental stimulation and social interaction. It enables members to meet the challenge of new sets of circumstances in their lives, be it as newcomer to the district, loss of a partner, retirement, retrenchment or diminished home responsibilities for those coping with the 'empty nest syndrome'. It provides the opportunity to meet old friends and make new ones in a congenial atmosphere devoid of social barriers, and at a nominal cost. The purposes of the School are to encourage the over-fifties to make the most of their leisure time, regain self-confidence, and, in the case of women in their fifties, become involved in an 'out of the house' situation in preparation for their husbands' retirement. This develops a pattern of interests that both occupies and stimulates the participants.

Drama and Playwriting Group at the School for Seniors

The School has become a source for volunteers to aid the community as they respond to appeals from many organisations in the community.

Questionnaires are regularly distributed to ascertain the continued popularity of classes offered each year and to evaluate new ones about to be introduced. The general impressions of benefits to participants are evidenced by the keen interest shown in the varied subjects offered and by members' early enrolment for courses.

An extract from a report by a new member, a retired school master, in his eighties, reads:

> Friendship and pleasure might be termed the keynote of the classes, classes in which one may discover unsuspected abilities within oneself. Through the inspiration of the Creative Writing Class I have discovered that I, too, may be able to write short stories. No matter what course one may be interested in, one's accomplishment has real therapeutic value. Many of us who may have thought we had reached the stage in life where we were no longer productive, have discovered to our joy that we can still create. The School teaches us that when we come to the end of the road, we can climb over the fence and go on.

This is indicative of the feeling among members of the School. The frequently heard remark, "I had no idea that I could ....", is further evidence of the benefit of mental stimulation. Several members have gone on to enrol in diploma or degree courses at Riverina Murray Institute of Higher Education in Albury.

We have one member who is brought to the School from a day care centre as a result of an outreach programme conducted by a volunteer from the School for Seniors. She is a stroke victim, her speech and movements greatly impaired. She is making a valiant effort towards recovery. Her mind is active and creative. She laboriously taps out her thoughts on her typewriter. As English is not her first language she has an added handicap. Through the help of the tutor and members of the Creative Writing Class, many of her stories have been published in the School magazine. Denied the pleasure of reading to her grandchildren, the children's stories she has written have been recorded on tape, giving her delight and added incentive. This, we feel, is one of the most heart-warming and rewarding results for the School for Seniors.

Tutors, too, have benefited from their involvement with the School for Seniors. We have a long-serving tutor, once shy and retiring and lacking in self-confidence after many house-bound years caring in a sick household and having encountered subsequent ill-health herself. When first approached she flatly declined then reluctantly agreed to 'give it a go'. Now, many years later, she is still teaching card games. The restoration of self-confidence and enrichment of her life can clearly be seen in her enthusiasm and that of the players at these card game classes.

INPUTS

Older people usually prefer to be with their own age group, except where academic studies are taken seriously. For many, the School has provided the opportunity to pursue aspects of education denied in earlier years because of the depression years of the twenties and thirties, and the Second World War and

its aftermath. Latent talents have emerged in all courses, confirming that these age groups have much to offer and much to enjoy.

The School has greatly assisted migrants in the district by offering classes such as English Expression for the improvement of written and spoken English.

The School has enabled members to live their own lives rather than being just an extension of their children's families; they are better equipped to communicate with each generation. It has helped members in keeping an open mind and to accept social changes with more tolerance and greater understanding. The result is a feeling of greater alertness and revived interest in life and a re-building of self confidence, proving beyond doubt that mental stimulation is, indeed, preventive medicine.

Teaching staff need to have an understanding of the needs and pace of this age group. The programme co-ordinator must have the ability to recognise this quality when selecting tutors. The School for Seniors has been most successful in this regard. Tutors and students soon settle into an easy relationship, the result being complete fulfilment and enjoyment of the course by all involved. An extract from a recent report by a tutor in English Literature supports this point:

> More than in any other class I teach, the learning is a two-way process. I learned from the people in the class as much as they learned from me. Some of the students know more about English Literature than I do, and all have had more experience of living. Discussion and sharing, rather than lecture sessions, enabled everyone to contribute their thoughts, knowledge and experience.

The School for Seniors, Albury, receives government funding of $3,000 yearly from the N.S.W. Board of Adult Education. This amount covers tutors' salaries for only one term of the school year. Student enrolment fees and regular fund-raising projects are conducted to meet salaries for the remaining terms and to keep school financial.

The School for Seniors has the use of a largely-vacated part of Wesley Centre belonging to the Uniting Church in Albury. This venue consists of a number of rooms, a hall and kitchen. Recently the Uniting Church has allowed us the use of two rooms in the former manse alongside the complex. For all this, we contribute substantially towards the costs of maintenance and electricity. During the time of its occupancy, the School has financed improvements to the property, and provided the necessary classroom facilities and equipment by extensive fund-raising and appeals to business organisations and social clubs in the area. The improvements to the property include the installation of air-conditioning in some rooms, carpets and furniture. A photo copier, phone-answering machine, film projector and screen, cassette player, P.A. system, typewriters, radiators and fans are among the many items of equipment the School has acquired by fund-raising.

From the outset the School has had a much-valued, hard-working committee which has been assisted in fund-raising projects by dedicated members. The spirit of the School is such that appeals for help bring a ready response. We have a number of office volunteers recruited from within the School. Co-ordinators have always worked diligently for the School solely on a voluntary basis.

EVALUATION

The School for Seniors, owes its existence to Mrs. Jean Hall, who in 1977 activated the concept as the first project of the organisation "Age Concern" (Albury-Wodonga). A television feature and subsequent visit to the School for Seniors at Wesley Centre in Sydney, provided the inspiration for development of the School. She was enthralled by the enthusiasm of its members, most of them in their sixties and seventies, all with a light in their eyes. By contrast, she noted the lack of enthusiasm at an inner-city Senior Citizens' Centre and wondered how much difference it would have made if these people had had the opportunity and motivation for continued learning when they were ten or twenty years younger.

The directors of the Riverina Study Centre and the Continuing Education Centre were asked if they would make facilities available, and support Age Concern in this venture. They were most co-operative and the Study Centre which, at that time was mainly in use for evening classes, became the venue for the School for Seniors when it first opened in 1977. After the first six months of operation, funding of $2,000. was granted by the N.S.W. Board of Adult Education. This funding has increased gradually to the present $3,000. This grant, and the generosity of tutors who accept about half the amount of the normal teaching rate, enables us to meet approximately one-third of the total annual salaries of teaching staff.

INFLUENCES

The success of the School for Seniors, has become widely known throughout the border district of which Albury is the major centre. Inquiries have been made from many districts for help in forming a similar group. Much publicity for the School has followed the official recognition of Jean Hall's untiring work in establishing and developing Age Concern, of which the School for Seniors was the first project. In 1984, she was given the Citizen of the Year Award. In January 1987, Jean Hall was the recipient of the Order of Australia Medal in the Australia Day Awards, as a further recognition of the value of her work in the organisation she founded.

The diversity of the programmes offered helps assure sustained interest in the School. Whether interests are specifically academic, cultural, culinary, or in handcrafts or physical fitness, or if they are aimed purely for relaxation, all needs are carefully catered for.

Having facilities for dancing, exercises and music contributes greatly to popular activities. Classes such as Drama and Play Reading, the Singing Group and Fitness contribute fun and entertainment at community lunches and the end of year open day and concert. This has led to concert parties from the School entertaining at hospitals, rest homes, day care centres and various other venues, and participation in the concert organised for Senior Citizens' Week. Displays of work by the Art, Leatherwork, China Painting and Handcraft class members at School functions and in the Public Library, are proof of the enthusiasm and our achievement. The annual publication of a School for Seniors Magazine, reveals the talent of members of the Creative Writing Class and others throughout the School.

The personality of the co-ordinator contributes greatly. The introduction of imaginative, lively new ideas, and change is definitely a good thing. The introduction of Old-Time dancing in the hall on Thursday afternoons has brought enjoyment and social interaction to its many participants, with the added bonus of pleasurable physical exercise. This has led to members' attendance at many of the city's social functions, as a group, extending the benefits of the School for Seniors beyond school days.

One of the most successful and rewarding extensions of the School for Seniors has been the mini-school, another concept introduced by Jean Hall. This is a group of over seventy-fives - mentally alert yet frail - which meets in the Common Room weekly. Hostesses arrange a programme of films, guest speakers, quizzes and games, to bring mental stimulation to this age group outside the confines of their homes. Gentle exercises are conducted by the leader of the Keep Fit Classes and community singing is led by the Singing Group, accompanied by volunteer pianists. Morning tea and lunch are served. All this is arranged and carried out voluntarily by members of the School for Seniors. A very rewarding outcome of this venture are the visits by trainee welfare workers, trainee geriatric nurses and students from local high schools who come to learn by observing the way in which the School for Seniors volunteers conduct this group.

The School suffered a minor set-back in 1979 when Riverina College introduced tertiary daytime studies since the School for Seniors could no longer be accommodated there. Wesley Centre then became our venue. So far as we can ascertain, the continuity of the use of these premises is assured as the present plan is for the Uniting Church to develop Wesley Centre for 'outreach' in the community. Though our continued tenancy has never been secure, we have contributed on a large scale to the improvement and updating of the rooms, and provided equipment and facilities. We cannot, in the present economic climate, expect additional government funding. We fear that our present funding could at any time be included in the many cutbacks currently under review.

The lack of classrooms has forced us to conduct the School over two days of each week. This entails a much larger workload, which is currently shared by two co-ordinators in a voluntary capacity.

OTHER

The city of Albury is situated on the border of New South Wales, only five kilometres from the Victorian border city of Wodonga. This creates an overlapping of resources. Wodonga now operates a School for Seniors independently and on one day each week. Some Albury residents take advantage of this if subjects offered and the timing are more suitable for them. The School for Seniors, Albury, numbers many residents of Wodonga among its enrolments for the same reasons.

Until recently many residents in the nearby rural towns and outlying farming districts surrounding the border cities attended our school in Albury. However, with help and guidance from our school co-ordinators, schools have been established in locations more convenient for residents to attend.

"Proud to be going back to school";
"Making the most of my later years";
"No time now to think of my aches and pains";
"My family say school is the best thing that has happened for me";
"School has taken years off my age";

and the delightful,

"What did you do at school today, Nana?"

These and many other like comments assures us that all who attend the School for Seniors, Albury, do so, not solely to give them something to do with their days, but because they value the opportunities that the School offers. The School has become an integral part of our lives bringing with it a sense of belonging within an ever-enlargening circle and of forging close bonds of friendship.

THE ADULT MIGRANT EDUCATION PROGRAM IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

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INTRODUCTION

The Adult Migrant Education Program (AMEP) in the Northern Territory is part of an Australia-wide program to provide a range of English language learning opportunities for immigrants to Australia from a non-English-speaking background.

The AMEP had its beginnings in 1947 when non-English- speaking migrants were offered English classes for one month. Over the years since then courses were extended to include day and evening part-time classes, radio, correspondence, pre-embarkation and shipboard classes. The first full-time courses for professionals with some English were offered in 1968 (Galbally, 1982:67). The formalisation of the AMEP came about with the Immigration (Education) Act of 1971. This empowered the Commonwealth Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs to make arrangements for courses in the English language, and for courses designed to impart an understanding of the rights and duties of the Australian citizen for residents who are immigrants or whose parents are immigrants.

Nevertheless, it was not until 1984 and 1985 that agreements or "arrangements" were signed between the Commonwealth and each of the states and territories for the latter to provide the AMEP in accordance with policy guidelines developed by the Commonwealth Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs (although this had been the actual practice for quite a number of years). The policy guidelines have been developed through close consultation with the states and the territories. At the risk of over-simplification, the Commonwealth provides the funding and the states and territories take all the action necessary to provide the range of English learning activities.

The Northern Territory has two major centres of population, Darwin and Alice Springs. The towns are over 1,700 km. apart, two days travel by road and two hours by air. Darwin has a population of about 70,000 (roughly half that of the territory) and Alice Springs about 23,000. There are six smaller but substantial settlements, the largest with a population of about 8,000 and the smallest with about 1,500. In addition there is a large number of small Aboriginal communities spread throughout the Territory. (Aboriginal people make up about 25% of the population). While the great majority of

prospective clients for the AMEP reside in Darwin, the broad range of English language learning activities available make it possible for virtually any migrant to enrol in an English course.

PROCESS

In the Northern Territory the AMEP is delivered through the Adult Migrant Education Centre, a unit or "school" of the Northern Territory Open College of Technical and Further Education. The following range of courses is available throughout the Northern Territory, subject to need and demand.

i. Full-time courses. These courses are generally for 25 hours per week, and may last from six to 16 weeks. They are aimed primarily at assisting migrants to gain sufficient proficiency in English, in a relatively short time, to pursue further study or to assist them in gaining employment.

ii. Part-time courses. These may vary in length from four to 15 hours per week, and be available either during the day or in the evening. Their duration is variable and dependent on the purpose of the course. The following may be offered:

general English classes aimed primarily at teaching or improving English proficiency and ranging from those aimed at beginners to those for advanced learners;

specific purpose classes aimed at meeting special needs, such as basic literacy, reading and writing improvement, pronunciation; and

special classes for the elderly, different ethnic or language groups, and mothers.

iii. English in the workplace. As the name suggests, these courses are usually provided in a workplace environment where there are sufficient people to warrant establishing a class - a minimum of eight to ten is usually required. Considerable negotiation is usually necessary with the employer before these classes are offered. While all teaching costs are met by the AMEP, it is important that employers can see benefits accruing both to themselves and their employees as a result of the course. The employer usually provides a teaching venue and may agree to give employees some time off work to attend the classes. Courses are tailored to meet the need of the specific industry and are usually conducted for six to ten hours per week for ten to 20 weeks.

iv. Tutorial arrangements. These include:

the home tutor scheme in which volunteer tutors visit people in their own homes for one or two hours per week, teaching basic English during these visits;

a tutorial scheme for professionally qualified migrants to assist them to acquire a sufficient command of English to practise their professions; and

the self-access centre at which students may enrol for an individually tailored course which may be undertaken at times convenient to them, with tutorial assistance provided.

v. Distance Learning. A newly developed distance learning/correspondence course was introduced in 1987, replacing an outdated course based on a superseded Radio English program. This course is available for people who do not have access to other forms of English language learning activity. A feature of the new course is a bilingual approach.

An important feature of the AMEP is the counselling service. Currently the Adult Migrant Education Centre employs two counsellors based in Darwin, the city where the bulk of the students reside. They provide three main services:

initial interviews with all people seeking enrolment in course offered by the Centre;

follow-up interviews with individual students subsequent to enrolment, to develop "learning pathways"; and

interviews with individuals to discuss specific problems relating to educational matters, and which may be student, counsellor or teacher initiated.

The initial interview lasts for about 30 minutes, during which time a decision is reached regarding the suitability of the courses available for the needs of the client. (If they do not meet these needs, the person may be referred to another educational agency.) At the same time an assessment is made of English proficiency to aid class placement and the subsequent development of a "learning pathway" for the student. The Australian Second Language Proficiency Rating (ASLPR) scale was developed for this purpose. The ASLPR rates each of the four macro-skills (Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening) on a five-point scale from zero (no proficiency at all) to 5 (native-like proficiency). In practice additional gradations are used, e.g., 0+, 1+, 2+, 3+, and so on, to further define individual proficiency. Essentially, the scale is a planning instrument which provides useful, though not specific, information regarding the client's proficiency in the four skills. It is not an assessment instrument and does not identify specific learning problems - these are identified by class teachers. The main purpose of the ASLPR is to help identify the most appropriate learning activity for the client and, in many cases, an appropriate starting point in the activity.

Teaching staff provide a written evaluation at the end of each course (usually ten or 20 weeks in duration) which makes suggestions for improvements to the course. The report also includes a subjective assessment of individual students and makes recommendations regarding appropriate future learning activities for each.

OUTCOMES

The aim of the AMEP in the Northern Territory is to provide a wide range of English language learning courses for adult migrants and refugees with a non-English-speaking background to enable them to select options which will assist in satisfying their English language needs (Adult Migrant Education Centre, 1987:1).

There is a great difference in the English proficiency of students who enrol in the AMEP - from those who have no proficiency at all and simply wish to acquire basic "survival skills", to those who wish to improve their English in order to undertake further study or to improve their employability.

Courses are developed to meet the variety of needs which are identified and consequently have different goals. Indeed, some courses may be offered only once or twice to satisfy a specific need. A good example of this is that provided for a group of Vietnamese refugees who wished to take up their previous occupation of fishing. A legal requirement for them to operate their own boats was a Master's "ticket". To obtain this, an examination in English following a technical course of study was necessary. Their first need was to improve their command of English. A special English course was developed, centred on the English associated with the fishing industry and technical terms from the required course of study. An example of a course frequently offered is that for students who speak and understand English fairly well but who cannot read and write in it. A special "literacy course" has been developed for this group.

INPUTS

Because of the partnership which exists for the provision of the AMEP, two major committees have been established to assist with the development of policy and administration procedures.

The first is the Joint Commonwealth-States Committee on the AMEP (The JCSC) made up of representatives of the Commonwealth Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs and two from each state and territory. The major functions of the committee are to advise the Commonwealth on administrative aspects of the program, on long-term planning at the national level, and the continued development of the various aspects of the AMEP. A number of representative sub-committees have been established to assist with these tasks. The JCSC meets at least twice a year.

The second is the State/Territory Consultative Committee. These committees assist with the broad planning at the state and territory level, review progress in the AMEP, and liaise with ethnic groups and community organisations to stimulate English learning arrangements. They usually meet five or six times a year.

Neither committee interferes with the day to day administration of the AMEP. The first is designed to assist with development of an overall national policy framework within which the AMEP needs to operate, and the second provides localised advice and assistance on the implementation of the policy.

In the Northern Territory, between 500 and 600 students are usually enrolled in various courses at any one time. For instance, in second semester 1987, there were 348 students enrolled in the day and evening classes in Darwin and 66 in centres elsewhere in the Territory; in addition, there were 50 enrolled in the Distance Learning Program and 87 in the Home Tutor Scheme.

The Commonwealth provides approximately $1m of the $50m available nationally to the Northern Territory to meet all costs of conducting the AMEP, including salaries of staff, child care costs of students, materials, leasing of premises and utilities costs, staff development and so on. Nineteen permanent staff are employed, including administrative, teaching, counselling and library staff. In small centres and for some short courses, staff may be employed and paid on an hourly basis.

INFLUENCES

The major influences on the AMEP during the past ten years have been three studies commissioned by the Commonwealth Government. The first is the Galbally Report, The Review of Post Arrival Services to Migrants (1978), chaired by Mr. F. E. Galbally; the second, the AIMA Evaluation, Evaluation of Post-Arrival Programs and Services (1982), again chaired by Galbally; and Towards Active Voice, a review of the Adult Migrant Education Program, conducted in 1985, and chaired by Professor W. J. Campbell.

The Galbally Report ranged over many matters affecting migrants of which the teaching of English to migrants was only one. Nevertheless, it was immensely influential, and according to many practitioners (and others) formed a watershed in the provision of English learning activities for migrants. Among the recommendations accepted by the Government were:

> (the establishment of) a comprehensive initial settlement program which would include classes in English and formal orientation courses including advice and assistance in housing, education, employment and other areas of need (p.7);
>
> extensions to the availability of full-time courses, certificate courses at different levels of difficulty, an extension of the range of advanced courses available, and the wide use of "on-the-job" English instruction and the home tutor scheme (p.8);
>
> better education for teachers of adult migrants, additional funds for conferences and seminars to enable such teachers to keep abreast of latest development s (p.8);
>
> an extensive survey by the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs of the needs of the various migrant groups (p.8); and
>
> intensive English courses for migrants with overseas professional and sub-professional qualifications to have them recognised here (p.8).

A quick glance at the types of programs currently offered will provide a good idea of the influence of these recommendations on the AMEP.

The AIMA Evaluation, as the title suggests, was an evaluation of the implementation of the recommendations of the Galbally Report. It, in turn, provided a series of recommendations and was accepted by the Commonwealth Government. Some of these are:

tuition for the On-Arrival Education Program should be funded on a staff:student ration of 1:16.7, comprising a teacher:student ratio of 1:20; provision for supervision at the present ratio of 1:133; and course designers at a ratio of 1:400 (p.49);

On-Arrival Education Program courses should comprise 20 percent full-time, providing 240 hours of English tuition over eight to ten weeks; 80 percent should be provided on a part-time basis for 150 and 180 hours over a ten to 12 week period. Priority for full-time courses should be given to new arrivals with least proficiency in English. The general priority presently given to new arrivals with an ASLPR of below 2 should be retained (p.50);

each Adult Migrant Education Service should establish one or more positions for program monitoring and evaluation purposes (p.88);

course, teacher and materials development should be conducted primarily at State level under the broad guidance of the Joint Commonwealth States Committee on the professional aspects of the AMEP (p.88); and

a formal review of the AMEP should be conducted by the end of 1987 (p.90).

The prescriptive, and often detailed, nature of many of the recommendations resulted in considerable criticism from the providers of the AMEP, leaving as they did little flexibility to take into account local circumstances, particularly in areas of small population. In the end they were honoured more in the breach than in the observance.

The Campbell Review undertook a wide-ranging study of: the characteristics of the population which the AMEP is intended to service; elements within the social and political contexts which seem significant; implications of the current economic situation; and the involvement of the various educational sectors in meeting the needs of migrant learners. The Review examined personnel resources, material resources, adminis- trative structures, learning arrangements, the content and methodology of teaching practices; administrative processes and funding processes, and came up with a series of sixteen recommendations, relating to these, designed to take the AMEP into the nineties. The Campbell Report has been well received Australia-wide by all providers of the AMEP.

EVALUATION

Research and evaluation at both the national and local levels have become important features of the AMEP during the past ten years, partly to assist in developing the most effective English language programs for adult migrants and partly to ensure that the funding authority is getting value for money.

The three major studies of the AMEP, discussed above, contained judgements of the merit or worth of the AMEP and thus, to some extent, are evaluations of the AMEP at the national level. The Galbally Report was really the first attempt to evaluate the provision of the AMEP. In recent years, however, there have been quite a few evaluative studies of national significance focussing on specific matters.

Ken Willing's Learning Styles in the Adult Migrant Education Program (1985) was a major survey to data about the learning modality preferences of students in the AMEP. In all 517 learners were consulted, each completing a questionnaire in the centres where they were learning English. The result was a series of recommendations on policy, program development, staff development and materials development. The Northern Territory, and some of the states, invited Mr. Willing to lead staff development seminars on the implications of his findings.

The Shaw and Dowsett study, The Evaluation Process in the Adult Migrant Education Program (1986) used three main tools to examine how the program was being evaluated nationally and to make suggestions on how the evaluative process could be improved. These were: the collection of course reports and any other kind of written report used in the AMEP; visits to 80 percent of the teaching centres in the AMEP nationally; and one long, semi-structured, audio-taped interviews of 114 teachers, program managers, regional organisers and state administrators. This report, too, has been the focus for staff development seminars on evaluation in the AMEP.

A Review of the Teaching Process in the Adult Migrant Education Program carried out by Low and Eltis (1985) took place over a ten-week period as part of the national review of the AMEP (the Campbell Review), and was designed to survey the methods and materials used by teachers in the AMEP. A mailed questionnaire (445 returns) nationally and interviews of teachers in Melbourne, Canberra and Geelong (46 in all) were used to gather data. Many of the findings were incorporated in the Campbell Report.

A final study of national significance, is the examination of the attitudes of immigrants of non-English-speaking background to Australia and English-Speaking Australians. Laurence and Andrich's Affective Domain Study (1985) featured questionnaires translated into six languages administered by bilingual research officers. The significance of the findings of this study are still being assessed within the AMEP.

As mentioned elsewhere, all teaching staff in the AMEP in the Northern Territory provide a short evaluation of the courses in which they are involved at their completion. The reports which result usually make suggestions for course improvement. At the same time there are numbers of studies carried out at the local level, either as action research projects conducted by staff or projects by student teachers undertaking a Dip. TESL course or the like. Examples which come to mind are studies of the Home Tutor Scheme, the Self Access Centre, and elderly migrants. During 1988, an evaluation of the counselling service in the AMEP in the Northern Territory will be undertaken.

CONCLUSION

The Adult Migrant Education Program is provided free of charge to all bona fide migrants of a non-English-speaking background as part of the Commonwealth Government's settlement program for migrants and refugees. As a further incentive for enrolment in classes, provision is made for the reimbursement of charges for child care where students need to make such arrangements.

The AMEP has proved extremely popular in the Northern Territory and elsewhere in Australia (where there are often waiting lists of people wishing to be included in classes). The main form of publicity is "word of mouth" throughout the various ethnic communities; it is not unusual for a newly arrived family to be taken to the Adult Migrant Education Centre by relatives or friends immediately on arrival.

The types of courses and methodology used are under constant scrutiny and are regularly refined to ensure they are the most appropriate for this rather unique cross-cultural educational program for adults.

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Note: The writer was Principal of the Adult Migrant Education Centre during 1985 and 1986 and is currently Superintendent, Technical and Further Education in the Northern Territory Department of Education. He was a member of the Steering Committee for the Campbell Review and has had many years of involvement in policy development for the AMEP both at the national and territory levels.

LEARNING FOR THE LESS MOBILE

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INTRODUCTION

Learning for the Less Mobile (L.L.M.) is an educational project originating in Hawthorn, Victoria, which provides learning opportunities for adults with limited mobility; most, but not all, are older people. The project initially developed out of a concern by residents and local workers that few of Hawthorn's house-bound population had access to education. The first learning groups commenced in 1982.

PROCESS

Each group consists of up to fifteen people led by a tutor and two or more voluntary assistants. Empowerment, enrichment and group involvement are the bases of these non-accredited courses. Consequently, emphasis is divided between course content and the development of skills which assist people to have greater control over their lives.

The program offers participants access to decision-making because they are able to negotiate what they will learn, and in what style, and are encouraged to voice their ideas and concerns. This means considerable weight is placed on shared discussion where everyone is given the opportunity to contribute. Participants of one group recently recorded that they valued the chance to:

learn, first and foremost;
share ideas with like-minded people;
express ideas without censure;
share mutual concern and support as a group member; and
be 'out and about'.

To facilitate group participation, a full range of teaching aids is used. Visual aids such as slides, overhead projections and tactile exhibits are particularly useful in encouraging active group involvement. Movies and videos, unless very short, tend to restrict this group interaction. Visiting speakers on specific topics of interest are encouraged to restrict formal talks to a minimum for the same reason.

Social interaction and acknowledgement of each individual within the group are also an integral part of the program. Participants are invited to share any personal happening and special occasions are celebrated. Much interesting comment takes place during afternoon tea, as participants continue to draw upon their personal experiences and resources. Relevant excursions are organised wherever practical.

The Learning for the Less Mobile Program is administered by a community committee which comprises interested local people, tutors and volunteers. This committee acts in a policy-making and planning capacity and as an advisory body to the co-ordinator. While program participants have been encouraged to be part of this process, it is in the area of curriculum content and choice of tutors where they most wish to exert control.

Learning groups have developed around a variety of topics such as travel, practical art, current affairs and social issues, television appreciation, health, well-being and safety, discussion on general topics, history of Australian women and families, and cooking for one.

A Group Discussion Course in Hawthorn

Since the program's inception, participants, tutors, volunteers and staff have contributed to the refinement of the program until the present format evolved. Informal discussions over lunch have proved invaluable in improving service to the client group and developing team-work among paid and voluntary workers. Development of the program in the first two years relied heavily on the input in the form of field-work placements by social work students from Preston Institute of Technology. A review of the pilot scheme was also conducted. Ways of encouraging participation have also been refined over

time. Through trial and error, home visiting has proved an effective way of recruiting participants and retaining participant levels. Personal counselling, sometimes over a period of time, results in sufficient confidence to challenge negative personal and community attitudes towards older people being able to learn. It is this personal approach and a sense of belonging which results in commitment to the program.

OUTCOMES

The program has been developed to provide access to education for a previously underserviced group within the community. Normalisation, integration and self-determination are all basic objectives. The program provides people with as normal a learning situation as possible by catering for special needs and regarding age, disability or frailty as no barrier to learning. While interest in a particular topic is central to group formation, there is also a development of personal skills which can be applied to other situations. Participants learn to listen effectively, help each other to understand what has been said, consider different opinions, speak out in front of others, share ideas and experiences, accept others with sensitivity despite disability and encourage others to take part. The subject matter of courses enriches participants' lives with newly-acquired or newly-reinforced knowledge, while involvement in the group empowers them with skills to take back into daily life.

The aims of the program can therefore be stated as to:

i. increase learning opportunities for people with limited mobility due to physical and/or social factors;

ii. provide the opportunity for people to continue to develop socially, emotionally and intellectually through learning;

iii. provide the opportunity, through a learning experience, for people to have greater control over their lives;

iv. provide the opportunity for integration and participation in community activities;

v. positively discriminate in favour of activities and programs that will enhance skill development and the initiation of new community activities; and

vi. increase community awareness and promote positive attitudes towards the ageing process, people with disabilities, and lifelong learning.

These aims have been developed over time by consultation with those involved in all levels of the program.

The L.L.M. project has contributed to raising local community awareness of the educational needs of older residents. The project is well-known and referrals to it come from local community workers. Information has been collected from participants suggesting that there has been a beneficial effect on their total well-being. L.L.M. workers and institutional staff are moved and impressed, and increasingly so,

by the comments participants make about the awakening of their sense of independence and their broadening of experience and interests.

Several participants who have transferred to institutions outside the municipality have been instrumental in recruiting new members, because they have so impressed staff with their personal qualities and interest in life. The commitment of tutors and volunteers to the program over time indicates the satisfaction everyone derives from being part of it. Access to education for this previously underserviced group has been shown to be an extremely valuable experience for all those concerned.

INPUTS

Participants range from the mid-fifties to late-eighties with most being over seventy years of age. Lack of mobility may be due to a stroke, multiple sclerosis, oesteoporosis, arthritis and other disabling conditions associated with ageing. Some younger disabled people have also attended. The majority experience immobility due not only to physical factors, but also low self-esteem, confidence and motivation, lack of support and isolation.

Enhancing Access for Participants

Isolation is very real, even for people living in their own suburban homes, when driving or the use of public transport becomes impossible. For those in institutions, activities which do not suit the staff routine may be discouraged and maintaining personal autonomy can be very difficult. With increased

age, meaningful social networks diminish. It can become harder to remain in contact with the rest of the world without relying on family members, who necessarily have commitments elsewhere.

It has been a deliberate policy to employ experienced, professional tutors, in order to provide the same standard of program offered to young, active adults. Tutors often need to draw upon all their experience and resources to develop the confidence, especially, of institutionalised older people and to weld the group together. Many of the tutors gained experience with the Council of Adult Education (CAE), Melbourne. This organisation, in line with its policy of supporting innovative adult education projects met the cost of tutor fees for the initial three-year period. Tutors have also assisted new people joining their ranks, by sharing expertise, recording impressions over time and also as part of a research project conducted during 1986.

Volunteers play an important part in the organisation and management of the program. Most are older people themselves who live locally. Duties vary with the group and the individual volunteer. Generally, volunteers assist with personal needs of participants should they arise. This includes assisting people in and out of transport, anticipating personal comfort or attending to needs for better hearing or seeing, etc. Volunteer helpers also act as a bridge between the tutor and participants during discussions. This enables the tutors to conduct sessions, without the pressure of this individualised caring role. Tutors have expressed appreciation of their voluntary assistants and consider them a vital part of a team approach. It is these volunteers and the experienced tutors which are the strength of the L.L.M program.

It is the role of the program co-ordinator to provide as near normal conditions for learning as possible. This requires an eye for detail with regard to the personal requirements of participants. Who needs special transport? Who needs a particular style of seating? Who requires individual attention with toiletry? etc. The co-ordinator is also responsible for providing venues, teaching aids and all other necessary requisites for tutors and participants. Procedures for the organisation of courses are now well-established and it has been found that the co-ordinator has to draw all the elements together, with patience. An empathy with older people and an understanding of the educational issues involved are also required.

Financing the project has demonstrated the creativity and endurance of its staff, members and committee. Keeping the project viable has often taken considerable dedication, time and effort. It has, however, been able to continue and expand, despite financial uncertainty. Funding and assistance in kind has been derived from a very wide variety of sources at a local, state and national level. These include the Hawthorn Community Education Council and member organisations, the Hawthorn Municipal Council, Swinburn Ltd., various government departments (State and Commonwealth), the Council of Adult Education, local service clubs, donations from private enterprise and individuals, philanthropic trusts, voluntary adult learning groups and the Yooralla Society.

More recently, funding has been made available through Technical and Further Education(TAFE) Designated Grants. It is anticipated that this will continue to be the main source of financial support, in line with a recent commitment by the Chairman of the TAFE Board to older persons' education.

Many hours have been given to the project by voluntary staff, students and local people. The value of this time cannot be measured in monetary terms. Most sessions are conducted in accessible community venues, educational facilities being utilised wherever possible. Teaching equipment is used as in other teaching programs and handouts are prepared in large face type to facilitate reading. It is not usual for participants to take notes during sessions.

It is the provision of access and facilities suitable for people with disabilities which has to be addressed: this includes ramps for wheel-chair access, rails in toilet areas and small scale, non-threatening environments like those available in community education centres and neighbourhood houses. Although it is not general policy, some courses have been conducted in institutions, where this represents the most appropriate venue. This was recently the case when a new hostel was opened. Sessions conducted at the hostel are assisting the residents to form lines of communication in a new environment. The decision to use this particular venue was only taken after considerable thought, planning and consultation. When deciding location, the following factors are taken into account.

Accessibility - for transport and participants.
Comfort - Educational equipment and aids available, heating, cooling, acoustics, phone, kitchen and toilet facilities, etc.
Proximity - to residential institutions and other facilities.
Normalisation - to provide as near as possible the opportunity to participate in an educational setting, used by the general community.

The provision of transport is the underpinning of the scheme to bring frail and disabled people into the community to share learning experiences. Without this provision their activities are severely restricted. Participants are collected from their place of residence and brought to various venues by community bus, multi-purpose taxi with hydraulic lift for wheelchairs, normal taxis or in the case of those in a neighbouring municipality, by volunteer drivers. The local municipal council supports the program by providing free transport for local residents. Participants using taxis have Ministry of Transport half-price vouchers and the remaining cost is met by the Council. The community bus driver is looked upon as part of the program team.

The process of 'going out' adds to self-esteem and confidence. Having transport arranged and confirmed prior to each session adds to the motivation to participate. One person recently discussed with regret her inability to walk far, but said that being phoned to confirm transport arrangements gave her a 'prod' to get ready and made her look forward with anticipation to the afternoon's session ahead.

EVALUATION

An evaluation of the program was completed by the Phillip Institute of Technology in 1983 and this served as a basis for forward planning and program organisation. A follow-up, student-centred evaluation has been proposed at the five-year mark. Ongoing internal evaluation takes place with regard to numbers attending and re-enrolling. Regular mid-way reviews of courses by participants, tutors and volunteers are conducted. There is also an annual review of the project conducted by the Committee and participants. It has been through this process of constant review that the project has tested the concepts basic to its establishment and procedures have been refined. It has also identified further unmet needs.

The Correspondence Course for Housebound and Isolated People has been a further innovation which grew from the concern and initiative of a former L.L.M. tutor. After two years of operation, it caters for people throughout Australia with severe restriction to participation in community activities due to physical frailty, rural or psychological isolation. The course offers a series of assignments, with the focus of writing based upon the unique life experiences of the individual. Writers are matched with a volunteer who acts as an encourager, commenting upon, and sharing the experience of writing, without assessment.A telephone consultation service is also offered and a collection of writings published each year. A number of former participants continue to write on a self-help group basis. This correspondence program now has an identity of its own.

In response to requests from members, a summer program has been established. Activities run throughout January and February, a time when many people confined at home or in institutions have most need for social interaction and intellectual activity. Families are often on holidays for extended periods, as are regular staff of institutions. The summer can be long, hot and boring for older and disabled members of the community.

A group not represented in L.L.M. programs has been socially-isolated, public-housing tenants and other lower-income people. L.L.M. staff have become actively involved with local council workers on the management committee of a housing estate's community hall. Through consultation and observation, learning needs have been identified. A short pilot course in relevant living skills was conducted in 1986. This has been further developed during 1987 to meet the immediate needs of this group. A course entitled 'Cooking for One' incorporating practical, small-quantity cooking skills, nutrition and budgeting has been well-received.

A program has now been established in the South/Port Melbourne area based on the Hawthorn experience and adapted to local conditions. As a model program L.L.M. has been thoroughly tested and reviewed over time and has wide application.

INFLUENCES

The major influence in the establishment of the program was the response of the former Community Education Officer (C.E.O.) and the Hawthorn Community Education Council to the needs of the local community. The project's development in Hawthorn reflects the socio-demographic profile of the population. More than twenty five percent of residents were identified as over sixty and seven percent as over seventy-five years of age. These figures were found to be double the Australian average, but indicated a trend apparent in other Melbourne suburbs and some country districts. It was the initiative of the CEO and the strength of the local network, with assistance from bodies such as the CAE and the Yooralla Society which formed the firm foundation for the program. With the availability of seeding funds and the employment of the first full-time co-ordinator, consolidation took place.

Negative influences on the development of the program have been the lack of continued funding for salaries and running costs. This has seen the expansion and contraction of the program with the rise and fall in funding. Future planning is difficult and stable career paths for staff are non-existent. Lack of suitable accommodation for groups to meet at the Hawthorn Community Education Centre places extra strain on staff resources and unreliable taxis are a constant problem.

Despite these frustrations the project has continued far beyond the establishment phase expectations. It has now formed the basis of a Centre, specialising in educational programs for older and disabled people. It has been a forerunner in its field. There has developed, in the meanwhile, growing community awareness of the ageing of the population and the need to cater for the intellectual as well as physical well-being of older people. Educational programs have been shown to contribute positively to the life of L.L.M. participants. The original premise of the program, that access to education is a very valuable, empowering and enriching experience not to be denied to anyone because of age or disability, has been confirmed. The recognition of access to education as a basic right is to be something worth working towards, not only for the residents of Hawthorn, but all older people. Under present Victorian government policies of equal opportunity and the Social Justice strategy which identified one of its target areas as the 'dignity and security for the Aged', the climate appears to be favourable to lobby for wider educational access for older and disabled people.

A definite financial and policy commitment to programs for older people from government sources would see the project and the Hawthorn Community Education Centre as an authority in this field, and able to assist educators elsewhere to establish similar programs. It would appear that older people may have their day.[1]

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1. (Acknowledgement is due to Ann Whyte, Ann Skewes, Marjorie Atkinson and all those who have participated in the program since its inception.)

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COMMUNITY LIVING PROJECT (C.L.P.)

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INTRODUCTION

The Community Living Project, (C.L.P.) is a program of the Challenge Foundation of New South Wales. It is designed to provide for the normalization and de-institutionalization of persons with developmental disabilities through the operation of residential group homes in the community.

PROCESS

Staff participated in two weeks of training which consisted of lectures, small group discussion, and participatory workshops covering material of a general nature relating to the project. Staff then attended a further two weeks of training in the use of the model being employed in this project and which included data collection procedures, preparation of an Activity Catalogue for Armidale, task-analysis techniques, working with residents to select and purchase normal household items for each residence and the setting up of each residence for occupation.

Residents needs are being assessed and an Individual Habilitation Plan being developed for each resident. Staff will be involved in direct training of residents in a number of skills in the home and the community on an individual basis. Materials are being developed to assist in this process and include specialized cooking programmes and money handling techniques.

Needs assessment was carried out by the proposed residents, parents, staff and representatives from the Department of Community Services and the Department of Health in the region. Their views were sought through meetings, interviews and direct interest expressed by future residents. Expert advice was sought in relation to the project from consultants at Challenge Foundation (Hornsby), the Health Department Regional Supervisor for Richmond Housing, and a representative from the Department of Youth and Community Services regarding licencing and management.

A decision was taken to prepare a submission for funding using the Neighbourhood Living Project (N.L.P.) as a model. This model was developed as a joint project by the University of Oregon and the Washington Division of Developmental Disabilities (1984) and had been trialled by Challenge

Foundation at Hornsby, N.S.W. This model contains a comprehensive set of procedures and guidelines for operating a residential group home for individuals with developmental disabilities.

Evaluation will be related to the general objectives and outcomes desired for the project, namely:

i. the adequacy and quality of residential accommodation provided (physical criteria);

ii. the adequacy and quality of staffing support provided considering the skills of the residents, training needs and so on;

iii. the development of independence, skills and community integration of residents; and

iv. the adequacy of and adherence to operating principles for the residences.

The N.L.P. Model has set procedures for evaluation, standards having been set for each area of operation - Management and Finance, Program Operations, House Operations, and Health Care Maintenance. A consultant from Hornsby will undertake an early implementation review within two months of occupation and further provision is made for an external review to be undertaken by evaluators from outside the organization. In addition, the project will be incorporated into the Regional Residential Evaluation Program already in operation for residential services in the region. As this model is in the process of development for a country setting, staff are also documenting parts of the programme which are inappropriate and this will form the basis of an annual review.

All staff have undertaken preliminary training before moving into residences. Evaluation during this period has indicated the need for specialised training in certain areas such as micro-teaching skills and management techniques for house Managers. All staff will attend one further week of staff development after having worked in the residences for three months. The content of this training is to be determined by experiences in the residences. Consultants from Hornsby have spent time in each of the residences with all staff and staff have also attended workshops in the community which related to specific residences.

All hostel residents were part of the consultative process in preparation for the move to community-based accommodation. Those residents who indicated a preference to stay in the hostel were encouraged to participate in the new project and parents who preferred a more restrictive environment for their offspring were counselled about the new funding arrangements for such services and the considerably higher staff/resident ratio in the new project. Another need for counselling was for those who preferred the institutional setting, having lived that way for most of their lives. Some parents were also concerned about the normal risks associated with community living and were afraid that their son or daughter just could not cope with any exposure. Counselling reassured these people that staff would provide all necessary support for these activities. The N.L.P. model also has a set of policies and procedures for entry to and exit from the programme and these were explained in detail to all residents.

OUTCOMES

The project is to close a residential hostel for twenty people (adults and children) with developmental disabilities and to replace it with community-based homes for the former residents of the hostel. The intended outcomes are to:

i. provide accommodation with support related to the individual skills and needs of the residents;

ii. develop the independence and skills of the residents;

iii. enhance their integration into the community and to increase their use of recreational and other community resources;

iv. provide a residential environment where residents feel secure and respected.

The major stated objectives of the programme are to:

provide quality accommodation throughout the Armidale community for 20 men and women and children with developmental disabilities, with support and activities which relate to the individual resident's needs, skills interests and life choices; enhance their integration into the community and to increase their use of community resources; and enhance the skills and independence of residents.

It is the Individual Habilitation Plan (IHP) which defines the behavioural outcomes the programme expects to achieve with each resident. This plan represents the way group home resources will be allocated to improve a resident's quality of life. Individualised plans are developed through a process of consultation with residents, staff, parents and advocates. Within the meeting, data is provided which documents the resident's current status; the need for behaviour and lifestyle changes as perceived by all meeting participants is to be defined, discussed and ranked and a reasonable set of these perceived needs selected as targets and translated into objectives. In addition, preliminary data monitoring procedures, intervention procedures and staff responsibilities are established.

In the N.L.P. Model, the Activity Catalogue replaces sequential skill-oriented curriculum materials and is the organising framework for individual assessment and programme planning, service delivery and programme evaluation. The Activity Catalogue is an organised list of activities from which training and performance objectives can be selected. The structure of the catalogue provides a framework for grouping activities that are similar and consists of two domains: leisure and personal management.

Some features of the catalogue are that it defines instructional content by analysing community environments and typical adult performance; it is designed for the Armidale community by local staff; and the locally referenced curriculum identifies activities that are functional in the user's own community. The N.L.P. Internal Data System provides a valid and reliable method of measuring valued activities based on the Activity Catalogue and identifies what individual activities a resident takes part in and a procedure for determining where and with whom the activities occur. The data is collected in such a way as to provide evidence of actual program benefits for each resident.

INPUTS

Participants in the demonstration project are the 20 former hostel residents with either a mild, moderate or severe developmental disability. All are either Armidale residents or from the New England Region and they attend either the Sheltered Workshop or Special School in Armidale.

Thirty-two new staff were employed for the project: a co-ordinator and two assistant co-ordinators (Programmes and Operations); ten residential care workers (seven full-time and three part-time); 15 assistant residential care workers (12 full-time and three part-time); and four trainees (one full- time and three part-time). Staff were chosen who had qualifications in the areas of teaching, nursing, or social sciences, experience in a related field, and a commitment to the principle of normalisation.

A budget of $627,000 was made available as Demonstration Funding through the Department of Community Services for the first year, with a commitment to funding for a three-year period. At the end of the demonstration period it is anticipated that the project will be approved for normal funding. A large proportion of the budget was for establishment costs in setting up the eight residences. Although a request was made to purchase the residences, only one was approved for purchase and the others were to be leased.

Because this was a new project everything had to be set up from the beginning. This included establishing an office for the co-ordinator and two assistants, staff training facilities, consultants and community resources, one house chosen for purchase, seven units and houses leased in the community, and furniture and fittings purchased for each of the residences.

EVALUATION

Three major influences helped the programme to evolve and they were the principle of normalisation, The Oregon Neighbourhood Living Project, and the fact that the Hornsby Branch of Challenge Foundation had trialled the N.L.P.

The principle of normalisation is the major influence shaping the development of community-based residential services. It has many implications for the provision of services and gives a philosophical and theoretical basis for determining what constitutes "good" quality care. Normalisation, as defined by Wolf Wolfensberger (1972), is "the utilisation of culturally valued means in order to establish and/or maintain personal behaviours, experiences and characteristics that are culturally normative or valued". It calls attention to what programmes do and what they accomplish for those they serve.

Application of the normalisation principle in human services benefits those who are most likely to be devalued by society because of mental retardation or other significant handicaps. Normalisation is important because it gives us a tool for identifying, analysing and reversing the vicious circles that trap people with handicaps. It guides understanding of how people become negatively valued and creates opportunities for them to be revalued. This results in: the challenge of higher expectations; increasing opportunities for choice and support; and handicapped people acquiring more socially valued characteristics.

Learning to Live in the Community

Implementation of the normalisation principle requires that a programme works to avoid devaluing responses to people with handicaps. Three of the most harmful habitual responses are these:

i. dehumanisation: treating people with handicaps as if they were less than fully human;

ii. age inappropriateness: treating people with handicaps as if they are, and always will be, children; and

iii. isolation: segregating people with handicaps from valued communities and valued people.

Understanding each of these patterns of devaluation helps define positive practices to ensure that people with handicaps experience dignity and individual respect, age appropriate settings and practices and as much participation in the life of valued communities as possible.

The Neighbourhood Living Model represents an effort to prevent costly and restrictive institutionalisation when out-of-home care is necessary, by providing instead a small local alternative that fosters community participation, social integration and ongoing family contact. The Model reflects several values about residential services and handicapped people. It is based on the belief that a group home should:

i. be of neighbourhood scale;

ii. provide a safe, healthy lifestyle that reflects normal activity patterns;

iii. provide individualised learning opportunities;

iv. support community integration and participation, regardless of an individuals's skill level;

v. provide assistance to the community as well as to the individual's served;

and represents a direct application of these five beliefs.

A representative of Hornsby Branch of Challenge Foundation of N.S.W. (Phil Morath) went to the U.S. and participated in a specialised training programme for the Neighbourhood Living Project. He subsequently implemented the programme in Hornsby and is now acting as a Consultant to the Armidale Branch of Challenge Foundation. The N.L.P. formed the basis of the submission to the Department of Community Services.

INFLUENCES

The Handicapped Programs Review conducted by the Minister for Community Services, Senator Grimes, recommended as a fundamental principle that services for disabled people should focus on the achievement of positive outcomes for the individual. The Review identified a number of broad consumer benefits, consistency with which implies a move towards services which foster community integration through smaller scale services (and the use of generic resources) and encourages greater consumer participation in service planning and delivery. The Department wished to select and support projects which had a trialling and demonstration function in exploring new service options which reflected these aims.

Challenge Foundation of N.S.W. Armidale Branch was successful in obtaining demonstration funding under the Disability Services Program 1986 for a residential services
option as follows:

> "a model deinstitutional project which supports an existing organisation in the transition from a large residential facility to a graduated range of housing options in the community for former residents".

Negative influences are those of social traditions and community attitudes. Some major socio-historical role perceptions of handicapped individuals or groups are as menace, object of ridicule, burden of charity, child and/or sick person. Community attitudes towards the handicapped suggest that they be excluded from valued activities, segregated from the general community and congregated into groups with similarly devalued others.

What this means for a programme such as this one, is that the community is not used to having people with disabilities living next door and its members are afraid of the consequences for themselves, their families, property values and the like.

A major part of our project therefore is to educate the community to accept that people with a developmental disability have the same rights and responsibilities as those without.

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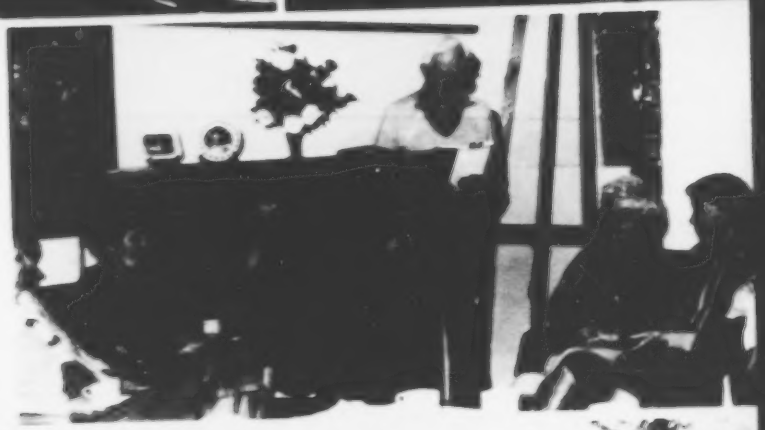

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